



# Astrotourism Towns Project

Update November 2022

## Solar Eclipse, April 2023

Western Australia will be the best place to witness a Total Solar Eclipse on 20 April 2023. It will bring world-wide media attention and attract tens of thousands of extra visitors and “eclipse chasers” to WA. The only mainland area in WA where the Total Solar Eclipse (“totality”) will be visible is near Exmouth in the Gascoyne Region. Everywhere else in WA and across Australia will witness a partial solar eclipse. Visitors traveling to WA to see the eclipse will want to be in Exmouth so they can witness totality.

The State Government is working hard on risks and logistics to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all. More information about the eclipse is on Tourism WA’s Ningaloo Eclipse website, <https://ningalooeclipse.com/>.

Astrotourism WA is organising a series of Astrotourism Town stargazing events to be held throughout the month of April 2023. Evening events held under dark night skies will feature stargazing, viewing through telescopes, tours of the constellations, introductory astronomy and engaging presentations about WA’s world-leading Space Science Industry.

Event dates have almost been confirmed:

Date	Event 1	Event 2, same date
Friday, 31 March	Lake Grace	
Monday, 3 April	Bindoon	
Wednesday, 5 April	Wickepin	
Saturday, 8 April	Narembeen	
Tuesday, 11 April	Northam	
Wednesday, 12 April	Wongan Hills	
Thursday, 13 April	Mingenew	
Friday, 14 April	Cervantes	Geraldton/Greenough
Saturday, 15 April	Three Springs (TBA)	Morawa
Sunday, 16 April	Denham	Murchison Settlement
Monday, 17 April	Carnarvon	Mullewa
Wednesday, 19 April	Bullara Station (south of Exmouth)	
Friday, 21 April	Onslow	
Saturday, 22 April	Perenjori	Gascoyne Junction
Sunday, 23 April	Carnamah	
Wednesday, 26 April	Darkan	
Friday, 28 April	Narrogin	

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The series of eclipse events is made possible by funding from Tourism WA, CSIRO, the International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research, Curtin University, Scitech and 18 Local Government Astrotourism Towns. The aim of the events is to:

- Encourage visitors and eclipse chasers to attend an event, visit an Astrotourism Town (<https://astrotourismwa.com.au/towns/>) or travel one of the stargazing trails (<https://astrotourismwa.com.au/stargazing-trails/>);
- Increase overnight stays in the Wheatbelt, Mid West, Gascoyne and Pilbara regions in April 2023;
- Showcase Aboriginal Astronomy and WA's Space Science Industry; and
- Capitalise on the global media spotlight generated by the 2023 Eclipse to promote WA's Astrotourism Towns as world-class destinations for Dark Sky Tourism.

Planning for the events is well underway. Branding and marketing is the next step to promote the events as we edge closer to April.

## **Astrotourism Towns Promoted Via 2022 Astrofest Astrophotography Competition**

The 2022 Astrofest Astrophotography Competition and Exhibition is an annual event. This year's competition attracted 380 astrophotography entries from 76 different photographers. The winners of seven awards were announced at the Perth Astrofest on 29 October 2022.

One of the Awards is for Best Astrotourism WA Nightscape for images taken in an Astrotourism Town locality. There were 27 images entered into the Best Astrotourism WA Nightscape Award (approximately 7% of all images entered) and featured images across 10 Astrotourism Towns including the Shires of Ashburton, Carnamah, Chittering, Dandaragan, Lake Grace, Narrogin, Northam, Three Springs, West Arthur and Wongan-Ballidu.



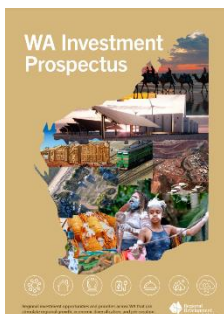
The winner was "Pilbara Skies" by Paul Harrison (above with Shire of Morawa CEO, Scott Wildgoose). The image was taken in the Shire of Ashburton and the prize was generously sponsored by the Shire of Morawa and Mellenbye Station Stay.



The runner up was “Arch of the Windmill” by Luke Hetherington (above). The image was taken in the Shire of Lake Grace and the prize was generously sponsored by the Shire of Carnamah.

Find more information here: <https://astrotourismwa.com.au/astrofest-astrophotography-competition-winners/>

## Dark Sky Tourism Opportunities in WA Investment Prospectus



Dark Sky Tourism is identified as a key investment theme in the new WA Investment Prospectus. The report is a collaborative effort from Regional Development Australia and is available online at RDA Perth.

(<https://www.rdaperth.org/rda-projects/wa-investment-prospectus/>).

Once downloaded, search for "dark" or "astro" to find the relevant sections. A large number of the Astrotourism Towns are mentioned on pages 71 and 101.

The report has key messages including:

- *"There is an opportunity to invest in regional tourism offerings that showcase space industry sites, Aboriginal cultures, dark sky observation spots and natural and mined geological features."* page 26;
- *"There is momentum in the form of WA's Dark Sky and Astrotourism Position Statement, regional tourism strategies, the UNESCO geo-parks certification scheme and existing infrastructure such as observatories and industrial sites. Together they offer certainty and pathways for harnessing international market demand."* page 26;
- *"Several locations have been identified for their astrotourism potential. To secure their value, the State Government has developed planning guidelines to protect the dark skies that make these assets special."* page 31

## **Critical Documents Dark Sky Tourism**

During the four years that the Astrotourism Towns Project has been running, several key documents have been published to support the development of the Dark Sky Tourism sector. Please find the links below for further reading. The documents are public and can be shared.

### **Tourism WA Dark Sky Tourism Market Research Study -**

[https://www.tourism.wa.gov.au/Markets-and-research/Specialised-Research-Reports/Pages/Dark\\_Sky\\_Research\\_Report.aspx#/](https://www.tourism.wa.gov.au/Markets-and-research/Specialised-Research-Reports/Pages/Dark_Sky_Research_Report.aspx#/)

### **Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage Dark Sky and Astrotourism Position Statement (Lighting Management Guide) -**

<https://www.wa.gov.au/government/publications/position-statement-dark-sky-and-astrotourism>

### **Regional Development Australia WA Investment Prospectus -**

<https://www.rdaperth.org/rda-projects/wa-investment-prospectus/>

**Astrotourism WA Strategic Plan -** [https://astrotourismwa.com.au/astrotourism-wa-strategic-plan\\_final-digital/](https://astrotourismwa.com.au/astrotourism-wa-strategic-plan_final-digital/)