

# CASE STUDY

OUTBACK ASTRONOMY:  
PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

### Business Profile

Showcasing the vast outback sky, Outback Astronomy is based in Broken Hill, just over a two hour flight from Sydney. They commenced operations in 2014 and offer an enchanting night sky show, taking guests on a personalised trip through the Milky Way. Designed for the novice, the one-hour sky shows are presented by sky guides with a passion for sharing knowledge.

Once guests are comfortably reclined in camp lounges and armed with powerful binoculars, they listen to live commentary through their personal audio system as the sky guide uses a powerful laser pointer to point out constellations and planets. Telescope viewing is also offered on selected evenings and weekends.

[outbackastronomy.com.au](http://outbackastronomy.com.au)

### Quick Facts

**Product Type:** Attraction

**Focus:** Nature & Night Skies

**Location:** Broken Hill, Outback NSW

**Destination Network:** Destination Country and Outback NSW



### How did the NSW First workshops help your business?

One of the best things we have done was to attend a NSW First workshop. During the workshop, the technical structure of the tourism industry began to make sense. The language of the industry and acronyms became clear. We could get past the unfamiliarity of the industry speak and delve into the facts and information necessary to exist. Our understanding of the industry, its key players, as well as what works and what may not, truly took great shape at this workshop.

### How did your business get started?

We love astronomy, but not in a geeky way. We wanted to continue to work together and we had the technology and knowledge in a field we were passionate about. We investigated a commercial opportunity and it ticked all of our boxes. We could work together in a business; it was something we loved and could do until we were 90 years old; we knew how to develop and administer a new business; it was commercially feasible and profitable with hard work; overall interest in space was increasing; Broken Hill had no astronomy business, and our environment was perfectly dark.

### What makes an exceptional visitor experience?

An exceptional visitor experience includes the owner's passion and full personal investment in every aspect of business development, with their eyes and mind always on the guests' needs.





### Why do visitors enjoy your product?

Our guests are treated like family members. They are individuals not ticket holders. They feel welcome, respected and valued. We have a transparent method of operations and explain the experience online and in our printed brochures. Following attendance at our sky shows, we ask our guests if the experience was what was expected and the reply is often "Yes, even better than expected." We put this down to offering a personalised experience that delivers on promise.

**"We offer a personalised experience that delivers on promise."**

### How did you develop a bookable product?

A bookable product came to us over time. It was slow and steady learning. We documented and remembered for the future, things that did or did not work for guests and as we improved the bookings increased!

### How has online booking software assisted your business?

Our business receives most bookings online and therefore an online booking platform is essential. It would be difficult for us to operate without one.



### What are your top tips for new tourism businesses?

- Be prepared to commit to your product for a significant time
- Seek to learn from others within the industry
- Select a successful industry partner who is not a competitor and learn, grow and share knowledge
- Take small steps and consolidate; then repeat

### How do you distribute your product?

At present we have an online booking platform on our website and also work with an online travel agent. We have limited ourselves to this one online travel agent as we gain more experience. We have distributed our trade sales kit to some inbound tour operators who are now looking to include Broken Hill as a destination, however this will take time. We are also listed on visitnsw.com and other key industry websites.



### What was the most important tip you learnt at a NSW First workshop?

It is important to understand the commissions charged within the tourism industry by inbound tour operators and online travel agents. Our experiences so far have shown that the bookings will come and that these guests largely align with larger groups of existing bookings. These bookings are increasing in number over time and this justifies the time and effort involved.

### What opportunities or challenges are you looking forward to?

We look forward to continuing to share knowledge about the night sky in ways that make sense to our guests. Our next opportunities will emerge as we expand to include daytime experiences. Our challenges are closely related to how we meet the expectations of guests as we deliver these experiences.