

FOREWORD

Western Australia is blessed with a wonderful natural environment. Its wide open spaces, unusual plants and animals, unique landscapes, towering forests, stunning beaches, and relatively unspoiled natural areas appeal to locals and visitors alike. Furthermore, an unparalleled diversity of wilderness areas and natural features are found throughout Western Australia's natural ecosystems, many of which are unique to this State.

This natural environment provides Western Australia with a competitive advantage in marketing the tourism experience. Increasingly, tourists from all over the world are recognising these values and are choosing Western Australia as a holiday destination. Western Australians are also travelling more within their own State as they increasingly come to value its natural beauty.

But as our nature based tourism industry grows it needs to be developed according to sound business principles that not only provide the greatest benefit to the State but also protect our special natural attractions. Nature based tourism also needs to be seen in the context of the overall State-wide tourism strategy for Western Australia.

Nature based tourism offers particular advantages to local communities. While it encourages expenditure directly into regional areas, it also provides opportunities for local people living throughout the State to be involved in this industry because of the relatively low levels of capital required.

Inevitably, as the industry develops, as nature based experiences become more popular and as air services are improved nationally and internationally, links will also be developed across State boundaries. For example, nature based attractions and experiences in far North Queensland and the Northern Territory will be linked with those in our own North West, giving a national focus to what we have to offer the rest of the world.

As this industry grows, however, the Western Australian Government has a valid role in regulating commercial activities within sensitive natural areas, and is well aware that without regulations our natural assets could be threatened. The Government is also aware of the needs of the tourism industry, and the right conditions will be created to allow commercial involvement while at the same time maintaining the integrity of the environment.

Nature based tourism can be about providing opportunities for a large number of people to be involved in a particular experience but is mostly about providing a quality experience for a few. It is about people seeking out a unique natural experience in its own right or as part of a wider holiday experience.

Good information and a high quality experience are essential if we are to foster greater understanding and sympathy for the environment, which is fundamental to protecting our natural heritage.

Importantly, nature based tourism will also generate additional funds that will help protect and manage the conservation estate, while an active and growing tourism industry provides economic conditions that enable the State Government to continue to invest in protecting our special natural assets.

The Strategy is published as a draft to allow for public comment.

The final strategy will be released following the consideration of all submissions received.

In implementing this nature based tourism strategy, the State Government is providing for a sustainable industry that provides long-term benefits for Western Australia.

Richard Court, MLA
PREMIER AND MINISTER FOR TOURISM

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

SECTION 1 - BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION	1
CHARACTERISTICS OF NATURE BASED TOURISM IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.	
Background	2
Natural Resources	3
Infrastructure	4
Existing Industry	5
ISSUES	
Awareness	6
Sustainability	6
Zones of Opportunity	8
Commercial Viability and Operator Security	12
Access, Services and Facilities	13
Product Development	14
Marketing and Promotion	15
Education, Interpretation and Training	16
Local Community, including Aboriginal Community Involvement	16
Quality Assurance	17

SECTION 2 - STRATEGY

A STRATEGY FOR NATURE BASED TOURISM IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA	
Vision	19
Fundamental Strategies	20
Secondary Strategies	20
NATURE BASED TOURISM COORDINATION	
The Role of Western Australian Government...	21
The Role of Local Government Authorities	23
The Role of Private Sector	24

SECTION 3 - ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, REFERENCES AND APENDICES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	25
REFERENCES	25
APPENDICES	
Code of Ethics	27
Glossary of Other Terms	29

SECTION 1 - BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

This strategy is a part of a broader strategy currently being developed to manage tourism in Western Australia. The Western Australian Tourism Strategy, which is expected to be completed by the latter part of 1995, will establish a framework to enable Government and industry to manage tourism in Western Australia up to the year 2000 and beyond. It will ensure that the State obtains the best possible benefits from the tourism industry in a manner sensitive to regional, industrial, social and environmental issues. The strategy will identify nature based tourism as a key factor in the State's tourism industry.

The Western Australian Government recognises the potential of nature based tourism to further contribute to the tourism industry and the Western Australian community. To ensure that the natural attributes unique to Western Australia are recognised and managed for sustainable nature based tourism the State Government has produced A Nature Based Tourism Strategy for Western Australia.

In addition, a National Ecotourism Strategy, produced by the Commonwealth Department of Tourism in 1994, provides a framework to facilitate an integrated approach to the development of ecotourism in Australia.

Tourism is an established part of the Western Australian economy and is one of the State's fastest growing industries.

In 1993/94 tourism injected \$2.1 billion¹ into the Western Australian economy, helped generate 67,300² employment opportunities (8.6 per cent of the State's total workforce), and contributed approximately 5.0 per cent³ to Western Australia's Gross State Product.

By the year 2000, the State will host an estimated 8.2 million visitors, comprising Western Australians travelling around their own State and 1.9 million (or 23.2 per cent of the total) interstate and international visitors⁴. A significant proportion of this growth will be in nature based tourism, recognised globally as one of the fastest growing sectors of the tourism industry.

Much debate and confusion has surrounded the terms nature based tourism and ecotourism in recent times. Tourism that features nature is generally termed environmental or "nature based tourism", a broad term that includes a range of tourism types including adventure tourism and ecotourism. For example, nature based tourism also encompasses cultural aspects because the cultures that visitors find attractive, particularly Aboriginal culture, are to a large extent shaped by the natural environment in which they have developed.

Likewise, ecotourism is a specialised segment of nature based tourism. Ecotourism relates to an experience in remote or natural areas that fosters understanding, appreciation of conservation of the natural environment and sustains the resources, culture and economy of the local community. Whatever term is used, all tourism should be sustainable.

Western Australia is uniquely placed to capitalise on the rapidly increasing demand for the nature based tourism experience. The tourism industry relies extensively on the State's diverse natural features to provide destinations and products to market.

¹ Western Australian Tourism Monitor; International Visitor Survey (excludes under 15 year olds); Australian Bureau of Statistics (includes under 15 year olds); Domestic Tourism Monitor (excludes under 14 year olds).

² Australian Bureau of Statistics.

³ Ibid; Western Australian Tourism Monitor; International Visitor Survey, Australian Bureau of Statistics

⁴ International Visitor Survey; Australian Bureau of Statistics; Domestic Tourism Monitor.

Western Australia's wildflowers, the Karri forests and the whale sharks of Ningaloo Reef are just a few internationally known tourism attractions that draw large numbers of visitors to this State. Western Australia's proximity to the rapidly growing and increasingly affluent nations of Asia gives the State a natural competitive advantage.

Western Australia has something unique to offer in terms of its variety of landscapes, wildlife, climates and the general perception of solitude and safety, unspoiled secure environment and wide open spaces.

Notwithstanding this, like all land uses, nature based tourism can have detrimental environmental and social impacts if not managed effectively. Effective management requires nature based tourism to be developed on sound management principles that incorporate planning, design, product development and marketing, with the objective of delivering quality experiences associated with enjoyment, appreciation, awareness and knowledge of the natural environment without the loss or degradation of the natural resources on which the industry is based.

CHARACTERISTICS OF NATURE BASED TOURISM IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Background

The World Tourism Organisation has predicted that the 528 million tourists in 1994 (worldwide) will increase by 24 per cent by the end of the decade and will increase an average of 4 per cent each year up to 2010 (WTO). But even more significant for Western Australia is the prediction by a Stanford Research Institute study which estimates a 10-15 per cent increase per annum in adventure or cultural tourism and a 25-30 per cent increase per annum in nature tourism⁵.

The Centre for International Economics in its report on the Economic Effects of International Tourism (CIE 1988) stated: "We see Australia as a niche market, offering a particular and 'special' product. While the reasons for a foreign visitor visiting Australia may be many and varied, the principal ones appear to be the unique landscapes and wildlife (there is only one Great Barrier Reef, one country with kangaroos); safe secure places, sunny, favourable climate (with seasons opposite to the Northern Hemisphere), open spaces and uncrowded beaches (in particular, compared with other destinations), relatively unspoiled and 'new' destinations."

The distinctive Western Australian environment is a major drawcard for both domestic and international visitors. Most of the State's significant ecosystems and unusual landforms are contained in national parks and other conservation reserves, but vast tracts of Western Australia that appeal to visitors lie outside the reserve system.

As demand to visit these areas increases, so will increased pressure come to bear on the environment. Tourism will be self destructive if it damages the environment which it markets as an attraction. The release of the Western Australian Tourism Commission's "Eco Ethics of Tourism Development" in 1989 was an important step forward in recognising this issue. It is now generally accepted that tourism should be planned and developed with a sensitivity to the environment. In other words tourism, like the environment, should be sustainable.

The benefits of a self sustaining industry are significant. By encouraging nature based tourism it is possible to integrate tourism development and conservation, providing an economic incentive for protecting the environment. In addition, by marketing and providing visitors with an opportunity to travel to protected areas and to discover

⁵ A Sense of Place, Summer 1992

the natural ecosystems, we have an opportunity to create new jobs and stimulate economic growth.

Natural Resources

Western Australia is one of the oldest places on earth. Many of our landscapes have been subjected to more than two billion years of weathering and erosion. The stromatolites that occur at Shark Bay and Lake Clifton are the world's oldest living fossils. Our soils have been heated, cooled, drenched, desiccated, and leached of nutrient for millions of years.

Western Australia is also an island continent. The genes of our plants and animals have been effectively isolated from the rest of Australia and the rest of the world for millions of years. This is one of the reasons why Western Australia has a flora as diverse as any place on earth and it is why so many of our plants and animals grow and live only here. The State has over 12,000 different flowering plants. Fitzgerald River National Park alone has more plant species than can be found in the whole of the United Kingdom.

With 26 distinct natural systems (biogeographic regions) as described in the Interim Bioregionalisation of Australia (IBRA) (Australian Nature Conservation Agency, 1994), Western Australia has the greatest diversity of ecosystems of any State in Australia. Eighteen of these regions are only found in Western Australia. Each biogeographic region contains a mix of natural and physical characteristics based on soil, landform, and vegetation features that make it unique.

The diversity of ecosystems and landscapes provide a range of natural and cultural resources that are likely to be suitable for nature based tourism. They include tall eucalypt forests, eucalypt woodlands, pockets of tropical rainforest, mulga woodlands, mallee heaths, desert lands including large dune systems and lateritic deserts, estuarine communities, marine areas including extensive coral reefs, atolls and islands, banksia and casuarina woodlands, mallee woodlands, coastal sand dune systems, grasslands, sandstone ranges, salt lakes, savanna woodlands, rivers, dams and lakes, coastal heaths, volcanic mountain ranges, wildflowers, gorges and escarpments, monoliths, stromatolites, beaches, coves and bays. As a consequence of the great diversity of ecosystems, Western Australia supports a diverse collection of fauna.

This great diversity, combined with our magnificent climate and the living Aboriginal culture, gives Western Australia a distinct advantage as a destination competing for tourists.

Within the State are some of the most outstanding wilderness areas and natural features in the world. They include:-

- Shark Bay World Heritage Area
- Ningaloo Reef
- the Bungle Bungles (Purnululu National Park)
- Wave Rock
- the Kimberley coastline and inland ranges
- the Great Sandy Desert
- the Pinnacles (Nambung National Park)
- the wildflowers of the south west and the mid west.
- the Pilbara coast
- the Abrolhos Islands
- the gorges of the Hamersley Ranges (Karijini National Park)
- Fitzgerald River National Park and World Biosphere Reserve
- the tall forests of the South West.

Other important natural features and areas of national significance include:-

- the Nullarbor
- the Goldfields area
- Marble Bar and environs
- the Stirling and Porongurup Ranges
- the Leeuwin-Naturaliste coastline and reef system
- Rowley Shoals
- Kimberley Ranges
- the Devonian Reef system of Geikie and Windjana Gorge and Tunnel Creek
- Lake Argyle and the Ord River
- the offshore islands systems including the Recherché, Dampier and Buccaneer Archipelagos and Montebello Islands and Shoalwater Bay Islands
- Mount Augustus
- Lake Clifton stromatolites
- world class surf at Margaret River
- Rottnest Island.

Western Australia's wildlife is a major attraction. Key groups include:

- wildflowers
- forests
- whale sharks
- whales
- dolphins
- dugongs
- rare mammals such as numbats, woylies and quokkas
- sea-lions and seals
- a wide variety of birds and reptiles
- sea turtles.

Our natural environment is one of this State's greatest tourist strengths. The mixture of attractions that includes the natural features of climate, plants and animals, scenery, openness and unspoiled landscapes are found in a higher degree in Western Australia than elsewhere in Australia, and arguably most other places in the world.

Infrastructure

Western Australia is well placed to cope with the current levels of nature based tourism. The emerging nature based market, however, will place new demands for infrastructure, particularly in and around national parks, marine parks, other categories of protected lands and waters and other areas of special interest.

The development of infrastructure is an issue tourism planners need to consider, and should, therefore, focus on the specific requirements to meet nature based tourism needs while being aware of and contributing to broader tourism needs.

On public lands some major gaps in infrastructure have recently been or are currently being addressed. These include the upgrading of the airstrip and safari-style accommodation being provided in Purnululu National Park; airstrips being upgraded on the Ibis Aerial Highway; safari camps and lodge development provided in the Karijini National Park; penguin viewing and research facilities installed on Penguin Island; and a boardwalk constructed over the stromatolites at Hamelin Pool Nature Reserve.

Other infrastructure requirements have been identified at Karijini National Park (Oxers lookout, walk trails, etc.); the Bibbulmun Track, Fitzgerald River National Park (Point

Anne day use and camping area) and Woody Island (low impact accommodation) to name a few.

Outside of public lands considerable investment has occurred on the Ord River with accommodation, caravan park, jetty, and transport facilities being installed; chalets have been developed at Margaret River and other South West locations; the shearing shed at Quobba Station has been redeveloped for accommodation; and accommodation is being provided at other remote areas such as Nanga and El Questro Stations. Other infrastructure work is required for example at Wave Rock (car parking, information, boardwalks) and Coral Bay (e.g. improvements to sewerage). Planning studies are currently being prepared that will determine future tourism developments at Windy Harbour, the Pilbara Islands, the Warren-Blackwood sub region and the Gascoyne Region.

Redressing the gaps in infrastructure will be a long-term task and will require a significant investment by all three levels of Government as well as the private sector, either through direct investment or sponsorship. It will also require tourism planning to be coordinated along with State and local government infrastructure planning and development for zoning, roads, and for providing power, water and waste management services.

The majority of interpretive and information based infrastructure, and the recreation facilities, such as walking tracks, day-use areas, toilets and access facilities, have been provided primarily by the Western Australian Government, local government and, to a lesser degree, by the Commonwealth through grant programs. This trend is likely to continue. Some infrastructure has been sponsored such as at Penguin Island and Hamelin Pool. Other requirements are provided by private investors leasing and developing facilities.

Accommodation requirements vary throughout the State with key areas experiencing shortages in all forms of accommodation during peak periods.

Lack of adequate funding to maintain and upgrade roads is also seen as an impediment to expansion of the nature based tourism industry.

Existing Industry

The existing nature based tourism industry can be characterised by the following features:-

- contains around 200 operators and is growing;
- comprises operations that are generally small and have been established by enthusiasts with backgrounds in conservation, wildlife or education, often amateur;
- is a labour intensive industry;
- operators need to accumulate knowledge to be successful;
- is young and, therefore, its community has not developed a strong or effective industry body structure although FACET (Forum Advocating Cultural and Eco-Tourism) is a representative body currently growing in stature;
- generally has limited financial resources;
- has difficulty in marketing;
- often focuses on targeted marketing such as education groups;
- ecotourism is a niche market experiencing extraordinary growth but is only a small part of the total nature based tourism market;
- standards of service and product vary considerably;

- recreational travel is the main medium through which nature based tourism activities are delivered;
- is lacking in guidelines, advice/information, product development and research; and
- has the potential to be a high-yield market.

ISSUES

Awareness

Currently Western Australians are not aware of and do not fully appreciate the value and benefits a viable tourism industry brings to this State. The benefits of a nature based tourism industry need to be communicated to foster a greater community understanding of the size and extent of this industry and the economic, social and environmental benefits it contributes to the State. Fundamental to changing community perceptions is the provision of better information about the visitor and the market.

Without a proper understanding of these values and the benefits that flow from tourism, key community decision-makers will not be in a position to foster and advance the cause of tourism. Furthermore, the benefits of nature based tourism can only be sustained by developing good practices that are regularly monitored.

Sustainability

Western Australians recognise that a healthy environment is essential if we are to maintain our economic and social systems. This strategy aims to maintain the very features and natural resources that provide Western Australia with a natural comparative advantage. Nature based tourism has considerable potential to impact negatively on the environment. Sustainable use ensures the base resources remain intact and viable.

The long-term viability of the nature based tourism industry depends on maintaining the integrity of the environment because quality experiences are directly linked to the quality of the environment. This is particularly true in Western Australia where our natural tourism assets are particularly fragile and, therefore, any activities need to be managed for long-term viability.

Monitoring or measuring the sustainability of nature based tourism activities is not easy, particularly in the short-term. Current monitoring systems need to be improved and research programs developed to collect information on visitor numbers and visitor experiences, attitudes and impacts. Models that compare and evaluate the cost benefits of the sustainability of developments have not yet been developed. However, the approach to reducing impacts to sustainable levels has been achieved through management controls such as restricting access, charging and setting levels of entry fees, restricting licenses, introducing management zoning and providing alternative sites to visit.

To assist in the development of sustainable tourism practices, the WATC published a "code of ethics" in the WATC's "Eco ethics of Tourism Development", in 1989. This code is still valid today. (This "code" is included in Appendix 1 to guide tourism developers, operators and tourists themselves in using the environments in the Zones.) These ethics cover the environment generally but become specific to the micro environments found within the zones of opportunity, that is, beaches and ocean frontage, remote environments, forests and national parks, waterways and wetlands, heritage and the built environment.

Natural areas invariably come under pressure from competing and often conflicting uses. With tourism comes people and the need to manage the land or aquatic resources at a level that can be tolerated (often described as “carrying capacity”; a concept familiar to pastoralists and farmers). The challenge for managers and the community is to establish a framework to manage this inevitable change.

Natural resource managers recognise that human use of a natural environment leads to changes in the conditions of an area. If the carrying capacity is exceeded for more than a reasonable portion of time (or if the area is subject to other severe stresses) the environment may suffer damage that may be irreparable or at least take a long time to recover.

Resolving the problem that exists between appropriate use and acceptable impact invariably leads to permitting some degree of recreation development. The irony is that the very features that attract tourism and recreational use are inevitably changed by that use. For example, soils erode and compact, scenic quality vegetation and wildlife are disturbed and as social interaction increases the sense of solitude may be diminished. As change continues the ultimate outcome can be a development succession. As recreational use changes with this succession, the original characteristics of the setting changes to such an extent that the site/area no longer possesses the attributes which originally attracted people to the area.

The critical issue for land-use planning and management is not the number of people using an area or facility but the condition of the environmental settings which determine both the conservation value of the area and the quality of recreational experience it provides.

Consequently the environmental ethical action must be that a tourism development or area should be scaled to operate within appropriate environmental carrying capacities. Determining the appropriate environmental and social conditions for an area or site is the key. Only then can management actions be identified that will protect or achieve these conditions.

Three key objectives relate to the sustainability of tourism activities and developments:-

- they need to be planned and integrated into specific reserve, local and regional planning frameworks;
- minimum environmental standards need to be defined, publicised and translated into controls; and
- models of “sustainable tourism developments” need to be created as examples of how nature based tourism can be made both environmentally and economically sustainable.

The models need to consider the mechanism for funding the management, maintenance and protection of tourism resources and should include instruments such as “user pays”, entry fees, resource rents, license fees, differential rating, taxes, levies, fundraising and grant funding . If these actions fail, the cost of maintaining the integrity of the nature based tourism resource will be borne by the taxpayer.

Planning, developing and managing a sustainable nature based tourism industry needs to be based on the principles defined in section 2, with the benefits of minimal impact tourism being promoted and marketed.

Sustainable nature based tourism also requires training programs to be developed for tour operators that include natural resource education and the principles of sustainable use, and specify the minimum standards required for nature based activities.

Zones of Opportunity

Any new approach to assessing opportunities and planning for the future development of tourism should include the nature based segment of the industry. Included within this is the need to develop a greater breadth of vision around developing "zones of opportunity", rather than being constrained within artificial statistical boundaries around towns, shires and regions. This will require a more conscious lateral focus to capitalise on opportunities and develop marketable products. Inevitably, links will be developed across local government, regional and even State boundaries. Examples of attractions in the Pilbara, such as Karijini National Park, can be linked to the Gascoyne's Ningaloo Marine Park. Also nature based attractions and experiences in far North Queensland, the Northern Territory and our own North West can be linked, giving a national focus of what Australia has to offer the rest of the world.

Air access is critical if all segments of tourism in this State are to be developed, and the increasing number of intrastate, interstate and international services will provide the necessary impetus to expand the industry. Given the remoteness of some of the major nature based attractions in this State, air access is particularly important in meeting the industry's transport requirements.

Zones of opportunity have not been identified as part of this strategy but will form part of the actions deriving from it. Local communities and tourism operators and representative bodies need to be involved in this process. Table 1 describes a process in which to develop an inventory of what resources are available and what can be developed. The zones can then be overlaid by seasons, cost of access, land tenure, etc. and then broadly aligned to tourist flows into and around the state.

Within the zones of opportunity a spectrum of land tenure exists that facilitates varying intensities of use. The spectrum includes categories of land tenure such as freehold, leasehold, Aboriginal lands, vacant crown land, pastoral leases, reserves, State forests, national parks, nature reserves, and wilderness areas where types and intensities of use differ.

Any approach in marketing or defining the product must consider the relationship between the visitor, the place, and the host community and the impact of external factors on this relationship. Because this relationship is dynamic, systems must be developed to maintain visitor satisfaction without depleting the resource or exploiting the local community.

This strategy has chosen to focus on a geographic approach to developing zones of opportunity.

Provided, by way of example, is a treatment of how the geographic approach to defining zones of opportunity can operate. Identifying the endemic tourist resources of a specific area is fundamental to this approach. These features form the core around which other nature based tourism product can be developed. It is possible to demonstrate this approach by using the Coral Coast as an example.

The Coral Coast Zone would encompass the North West Cape including Exmouth Gulf, Cape Range National Park and Ningaloo Reef from the NW Cape to Coral Bay. The zone boundaries are defined by the location of the core (endemic) features, (the extent of the reef, range and gulf, on which most of the tourism activities are based) and proximity to the main service centre of Exmouth. The core endemic resources include the world's largest fringing coral reef and whale sharks. Other endemic features include an attractive sandstone mountain range, coastal karst system and associated cave fauna. Attractions include beaches, climate, endemic fauna and flora, world class diving, caves, fishing, snorkelling, camping, walking, swimming, sailing, boating, sightseeing and flight seeing. The rationale for the zone is based on access to

these activities through the main service centre of Exmouth. Access to the zone is by a primary highway and a daily air service from Perth. It can be seen from this approach that a range of features can be developed around the zone's key attractions, the reef, whale sharks and the range.

Figure 1 shows the location of the Coral Coast zone and the relationship between the core (endemic) features, other tourism product and access to and from other zones.

Figure 2 shows other potential zones of opportunity and is by no means comprehensive. Other zones could be developed around Shark Bay, the NW Coast, Albany, Esperance, the Goldfields, etc.

Figure 1 - CORAL COAST ZONE

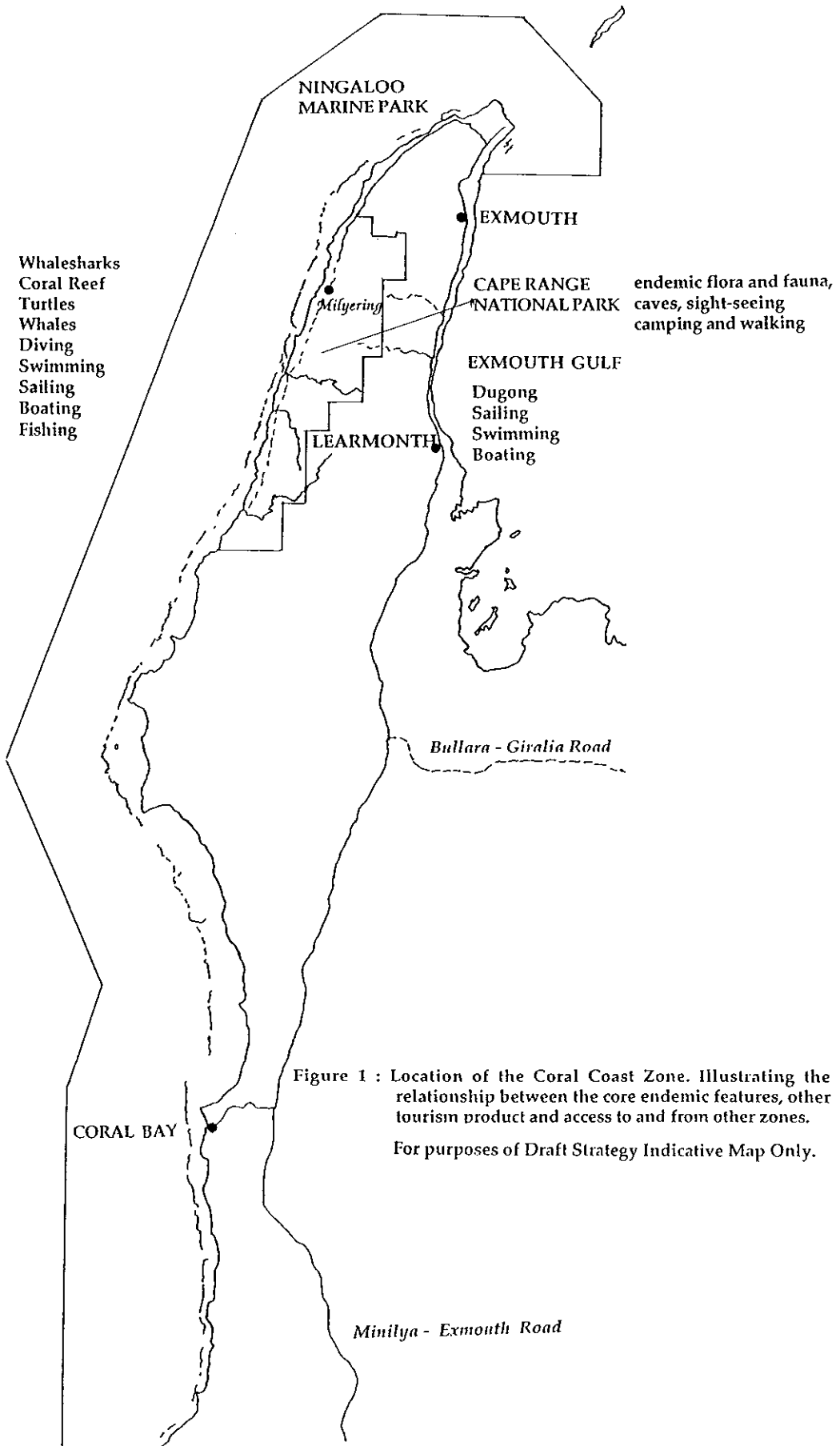


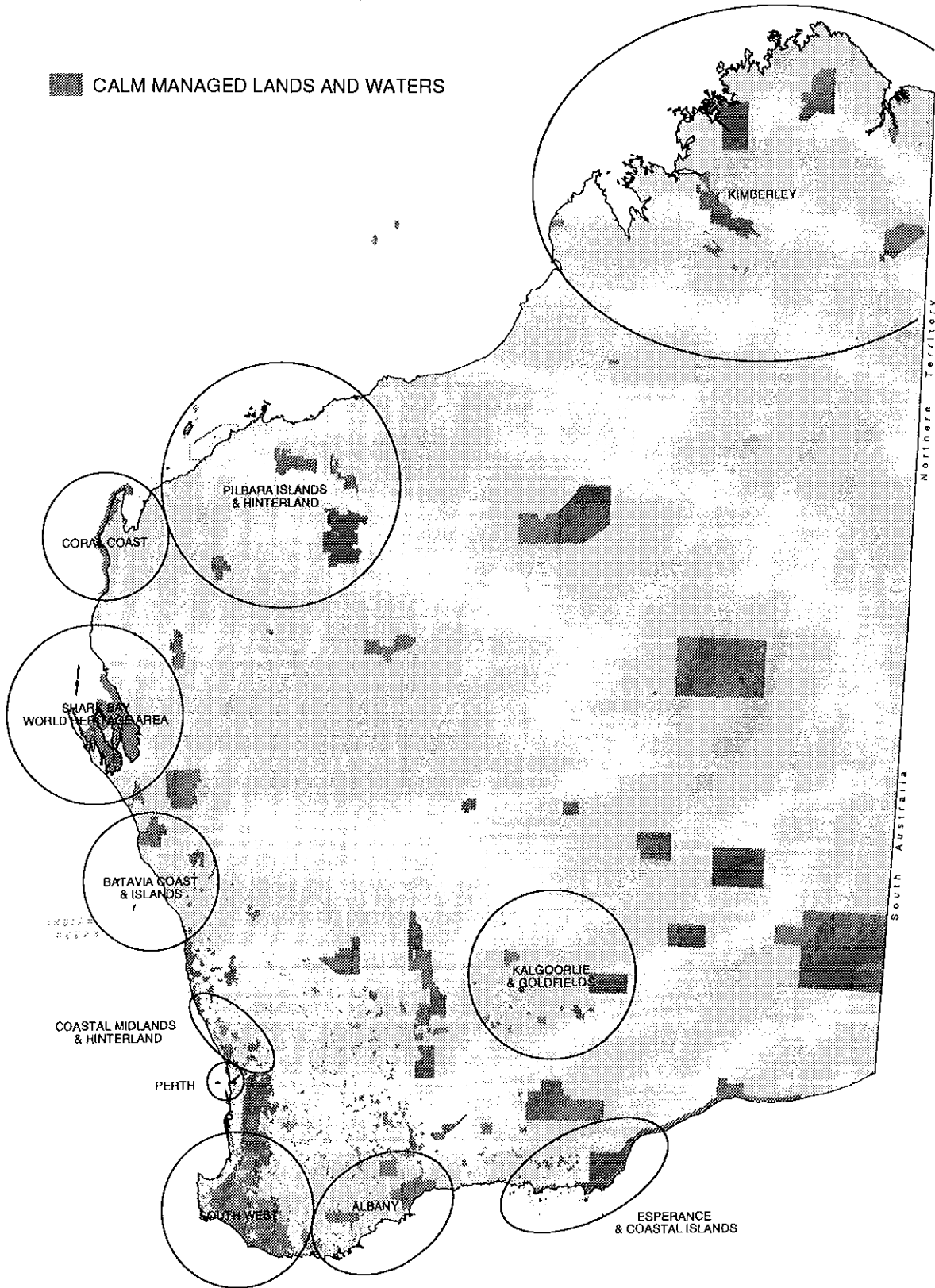
Figure 1 : Location of the Coral Coast Zone. Illustrating the relationship between the core endemic features, other tourism product and access to and from other zones.

For purposes of Draft Strategy Indicative Map Only.

Figure 2 - OTHER POTENTIAL ZONES OF OPPORTUNITY

For purposes of draft strategy, indicative map only

 CALM MANAGED LANDS AND WATERS



14

18

Table 1.

<u>Description of Zone</u>	
Geographical area	The area of the zone.
Key Features	The <u>endemic or unique features</u> (core features) that are the key assets for the zone.
Supporting Attractions	The underlying attractions that help to distinguish the zone from other zones. There would be both particular and constant attractions.
Rationale	The reason the area should be declared a zone of opportunity.
Market Position	The position the zone currently holds in the market place.
Traffic Patterns	Access to the zone.
<u>Basic Strategy</u>	
Major Development Initiatives	The type and style of development. The relationship/link between the core activities and other activities.
Infrastructure needs and Limitations	Significant developments, if any, that are required for the zone to realise its potential.
Community/Aboriginal Participation	Infrastructure deficiencies that need to be overcome.
Management Initiators	Opportunities that exist for local community/Aboriginal involvement.
	The organisation/s with responsibility for initiating management programs.

Commercial Viability and Operator Security

Nature based tourism can provide economic benefits at a local, regional and national level. The ability to maximise this benefit involves overcoming a number of factors that currently characterise the industry. Nature based tourism opportunities:-

- are frequently suitable only for small scale operations (one or two person operations or small developments), which favour locally based operators.
- are often difficult to capitalise because of the “single operator” nature and the immaturity of the industry.
- are frequently unable to benefit from economies of scale available to large scale tourism operations. This could be overcome, to some degree, through cooperative marketing, promotion and development of nature based products between tour operators and by marketing zones of opportunity.
- require operators to be multi-skilled to deal with product delivery, marketing, administration and operational management. These requirements, while not restricting entry to the industry, reduce the viability of those already participating (because the barriers to entry are relatively few) and suggest the need for training programs to be developed to enhance the business skills of tour operators.
- are often reliant on features in remote locations. The cost of transport and lack of supporting infrastructure influences the viability of such enterprises.
- are often highly seasonal. The commercial viability of some operators can depend on their versatility and ability to develop other opportunities in

the off season. Operators need to identify and develop a greater range of nature based tourism opportunities suitable for nature based tourism in regional areas.

- are mostly available on public lands and waters where viability is affected by the type and security of access and tenure available. The cost of Government fees and charges and some administrative practices can affect viability.
- using responsible environmental practices can mean additional costs through the use of new technology, effective waste management and recycling.
- are being stifled because the cost of public liability insurance has been prohibitive to a significant number of potential and existing small operators. This may be overcome by developing an industry-wide insurance scheme for nature based operators. In addition, operators should be encouraged to implement effective risk management programs to minimise premiums.

Access, Service and Facilities

Infrastructure is an essential component for most nature based activities. Infrastructure consists of access (roads, airstrips and jetties), services (power, water telephone, waste disposal and information) and facilities (camping areas, accommodation, moorings, walking trails, viewing platforms, road and interpretive signs, car parking areas, day-use areas, toilets and rest stops).

Where nature based development is proposed it should aim to enhance the natural experience without detracting from the natural environment.

The level of access to natural areas directly impacts on the scale of tourism development possible and the potential level of impact to the environment. Area management plans are integral in determining the type and level of access appropriate to protected areas. Visitation, and hence the level of tourism, will vary inversely with the cost of access.

Managers have traditionally relied on a number of mechanisms to regulate the degree and type of access to manage impacts and protect sensitive systems and wildlife. They include varying the level of visitor use, entry fees, restrictive licensing, maintaining primitive access conditions (that is, unsealed and 4WD roads), management zoning, physical barriers, providing alternative opportunities, education and interpretation.

The ability to access areas is also a factor limiting the growth of ecotourism. The type and extent of access provided or available (and also other facilities support services) to a large extent dictate the scale of tourism development possible and the potential level of impact to the environment. For example, to be able to access a package of remote attractions in the Kimberley, air transport is the only feasible and sustainable method of access to base sites. The factor limiting nature based tourism in this area has been the lack of airstrips and associated services at key locations. Now that this is occurring, a series of viable tourism products has been developed based on small numbers of high yielding clients with limited time and who are seeking quality nature based experiences.

The level of facilities and services provided is directly linked to the level of visitation. Investment in services and facilities will also vary with the degree to which property rights are assigned to operators for access to those structures. It is important that minimum standards are developed for the design and construction of services and facilities.

The location, style and extent of infrastructure is a sensitive issue. Opposition exists to the location of any or some forms of infrastructure in protected areas. Irrespective of their location some impacts will occur, and it is important that local communities outside protected areas are encouraged to develop complementary facilities and services. Each proposal needs to be based on the principles outlined in Section 1.4 and approved according to social, environmental and economic considerations.

The infrastructure requirements of priority ecotourism destinations need to be assessed and a strategy to develop and finance a proposal produced. This strategy would form the basis for seeking Commonwealth, State and local government funding. The strategy would also be adopted by Regional Development Commissions. Infrastructure development should focus on establishing one or two key attractions in each region to act as icons for developing other products.

The Department of Conservation and Land Management's current policy of retaining all fees collected in local parks and directing those funds to maintain and develop park facilities will aid some infrastructure programs. This will be further enhanced by providing more nature based tourism opportunities on CALM managed lands and waters. These opportunities will be leased or licensed to operators through public tender processes.

If nature based tourism is to grow in Western Australia, it will need developments that meet the range of nature based experiences and, in particular, ecotourism experiences. Any new ecotourism developments will need to capture the unique and appealing aspects of the Western Australian experience and convey messages that are consistent with Western Australia being portrayed as a wild, vast, remote, and ancient land. A key factor to this growth will be in identifying and making available a greater range of nature based tourism opportunities for tour operators.

For Western Australia to develop the full potential of its nature based tourism experiences a range of quality accommodation is needed in all regions. Large scale developments (over 200 beds) are required in most areas. These may be in a natural setting and undertaken in an environmentally responsible manner or in nodal developments associated with service centres. Such facilities serve as a base from which smaller nature based operations can draw and grow. Small, low-impact lodge and safari camp style accommodation are models that are meeting market expectations in places like Tasmania and north Queensland, and would also be appropriate developments for this State. If market predictions are correct, the growth in demand will be for this style of small-scale accommodation.

Small-scale accommodation that minimises environmental impacts can potentially match the economic performance of larger developments. New technologies in power generation, desalination and waste management have made such small to medium scale developments more economically and environmentally viable.

Currently within Western Australia, limited accommodation projects of this style are available that can act as models to demonstrate low impact technologies and ecologically sustainable development (although the offshore petroleum modules are based on good principles and technologies). El Questro and Beverley Springs are two examples, however, because they are relatively recent developments the economic viability, financing and investment response to such proposals cannot be assessed.

Product Development

Nature based tourism products encompass a wide range of tourism activities. Ecotourism forms part of that product range.

Nature based tourism products can be linked to a particular location, activity or

species. Currently a range of products in the nature based tourism market cater for local, interstate and international visitors. The primary focus of product development should be to ensure that existing and future products are quality products, are authentic, provide rewarding experiences and generate repeat visits or positive outcomes.

Opportunities exist to develop new products to cater for the range of experiences being sought by the visitor and for individuals, groups and special interest groups. New product development should be based on a clearly identified nature based tourism market and a good understanding of consumer motivations and travel behaviour. Product development also needs to ensure that equity of access is built into the range of opportunities provided to cater for all socio-economic levels.

A zonal approach to product development can be a useful way of providing a range of tourism opportunities in order to broaden the appeal and maximise visitor experiences. Regional tourism and nature based tourism plans will assist this process.

Product development should be a natural outcome of addressing the range of issues outlined in this strategy. By implementing strategies relating to infrastructure, providing greater information, training and product delivery, the quality of product provided will be maximised.

Cooperative marketing within the industry and between government and industry will enhance product development, while the joint development of nature based itineraries and packages and good distribution of product information will also assist.

Opportunities for product development will also be enhanced by developing an operator network, developing awareness of the strategic opportunities that exist, providing resources to assist develop products, providing information and training, especially for product delivery and development, and developing awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the local product.

Nature based tourism product development often relies on the degree to which partnerships can be developed between operators and land or wildlife managers and between operators themselves. This can be assisted by facilitating formal training and information programs and industry networks.

Marketing and Promotion

Western Australia's tourism assets revolve around the diversity of our natural attractions. Positioning the State in the market place is vital to the success of the nature based tourism industry, particularly the marketing of the different attributes and opportunities that exist in the various regions. Connections in regard to product availability need to be made across regional boundaries and, in some cases, across State boundaries.

Nature based products need to be presented to accentuate the quality of experience being offered, and they need to be presented as part of the product mix available within the zones of opportunity. A product's focus or position will depend on what other products are on offer in a particular zone. Like any other tourism product, nature based products need to change and be adaptive to the market place.

Consumers will access nature based products at different levels, some as their sole tourism experience and others as part of a range of tourism experiences on a particular trip. These differing levels of experiences need to be recognised and catered for by the "experience provider", requiring different marketing approaches, as well as individual servicing as part of the overall experience being offered.

Unlike other forms of tourism that generally appeal to mass markets, nature based tourism generally needs to target a particular market. While this market is still in its early stages of development, joint operator promotions under the umbrella of the WATC would seem an ideal approach for individual operators to maximise their promotional dollars.

Monitoring and testing of marketing and promotion programs are required to determine their effectiveness.

Education, Interpretation and Training

Education has the potential to influence tourism behaviour and bring about positive outcomes. Tourism behaviour, both responsible or otherwise, can impact significantly on the long-term sustainability of tourist activities in natural areas.

It is accepted that the quality of a nature based tourism experience is linked closely to the level of interpretation and quality of information presented by operators and guides. It is, therefore, imperative to the success of nature based tourism that the level of training of operators and guides in educational information and presentation techniques needs to be widespread throughout the industry and of a high standard. The quality and extent of training will directly affect the quality of information presentation.

Tour operators and land and wildlife managers have a joint responsibility for obtaining and developing educational and informational material. Information can be drawn from a wide range of sources but requires some training to translate information into interesting, stimulating and informative presentations. This can involve the development of geographically based modules.

CALM and EPA/DEP are the custodians of a large amount of essential information in the form of publications, brochures and have excellent resources in terms of staff knowledge and experience.

Land managers, professional interpreters and research staff can all play an important part in developing, providing, presenting and delivering information and education components for nature based tourism activities. The level of resourcing to support these roles is critical.

Tour leaders and operators (particularly in relation to ecotourism activities) need to have a knowledge of ecology, cultural issues, conservation and minimal impact practices, and be skilled interpreters. (National Ecotourism Strategy, 1994.) In addition, they should be aware of the principles of protected area management and local management issues.

Pamphlets, signs, information panels and displays, static and interactive, are important tools in the interpretation and information area, and crucial to modifying the behaviour of free independent travellers who make up a significant percentage of visitors to remote and sensitive areas.

Local Community, Including Aboriginal Community Involvement

Nature based tourism can provide significant benefits to local communities, including financial and employment opportunities. Opportunities exist for people living in local communities to participate in the nature based tourism industry as tour operators and providers of knowledge, services, facilities and products.

Local community involvement in planning and developing tourist activities and protecting natural area assists significantly in ensuring positive interactions between

communities and tourists. In addition, early involvement enables local communities to be proactive to ensure that tourism development results in maximum benefits to those communities.

The sustainable use of natural areas can be greatly enhanced by involving local communities in tourism planning and activities. This is because local people develop personal and historical attachments to natural areas that aids in their long-term protection. This involvement can sometimes be difficult to achieve, especially in remote areas where communities without historical involvement with the tourism sector are often reluctant to interact and may be unaware or are sceptical about the potential benefits to their communities. Local communities should be encouraged to develop plans and strategies to develop and enhance tourism in their localities.

Nature based tourism provides an excellent opportunity for Aboriginal people to participate in and benefit from the tourism industry by presenting their culture in a natural setting and sharing with others their unique relationship with the environment. Where appropriate, this relationship should be incorporated when tourism products are being planned and developed. This is particularly important when nature based tourism involves special resources occurring on Aboriginal owned lands.

Quality Assurance

The developing competitiveness of the tourism industry demands that operators deliver a quality product and service to their customer. This is no more evident than in the nature based segment which is not about moving mass numbers of tourists but about providing a quality experience to a niche market.

The growing demand for nature based tourism experiences has sparked a growth in the number of operators whose standards vary in relation to the quality of their nature based experience, the environmental sustainability of their business and the quality of the knowledge provided to the customer.

The Commonwealth through its National Eco-tourism Strategy is currently investigating the feasibility of implementing a national accreditation program for operators in the ecotourism market.

Around Australia codes of practices and regulations are overlaid on the tourism industry, and there is the danger of over regulating and developing a bureaucracy to oversee codes of conduct and enforce regulation. While the industry advocates for quality controls and standards, the opportunity exists for the industry to self regulate and use existing statutory frameworks and training programs already in the marketplace.

The Australian Standards 150 9000 series provides a framework for quality assurance, while the national customer service program, Aussie Host, provides modular programs for service training.

In addition, the Department of Conservation and Land Management defines standards of operation for licensed operators (through licence conditions) operating in protected areas.

SECTION 2 - STRATEGY

A STRATEGY FOR NATURE BASED TOURISM IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Vision

To ensure that Western Australia maintains its natural advantages and establishes itself as the Australian nature based tourism destination.

The vision is further articulated by way of five guiding principles:

- **conservation of the natural environment**
nature based tourism must:-
 - develop an industry based on sustainable development.
 - protect the State's natural assets.
 - develop and use a Code of Practice to achieve sustainability.
 - return benefits to the natural environment.
- **involving and benefiting local communities**
nature based tourism must:-
 - provide benefits to local and regional economies.
 - support and promote the affinity between Aboriginal people and the land.
 - identify and promote nature based opportunities for local communities including Aboriginal communities.
- **improving knowledge**
nature based tourism must:-
 - understand the link between natural and cultural heritage.
 - promote understanding of the environment.
 - provide quality information and interpretation of our natural environment.
- **a commitment to providing quality products and services**
nature based tourism must:-
 - ensure visitor satisfaction.
 - identify appropriate product development opportunities.
 - develop awareness of the range of Western Australian quality nature based tourism products through selective marketing strategies.
 - provide training and development opportunities, including accreditation procedures for operators.
 - recognise and utilise national and international links.
- **efficient and effective industry**
nature based tourism must:-
 - meet statutory responsibilities.
 - establish, identify and agree on appropriate roles for Government and industry bodies to optimise involvement in the industry.
 - establish structures that facilitate effective communication between industry and government.
 - reduce barriers to operator development and establishment.
 - integrate Government planning, administration and regulation.

This vision and underlying principles set the framework on which the remainder of this strategy is developed.

The following actions will form the instruments for developing principles and recommendations for nature based tourism in Western Australia. It may be that other actions are required to further articulate this strategy.

Fundamental Strategies

Awareness

- Develop awareness and appreciation for the values and benefits of nature based tourism.

Sustainability

- Develop sustainable nature based tourism experiences that contribute positively to conserving and managing Western Australia's natural environment.
- Develop standards, policies and practices that will sustain a nature based tourism industry.
- Establish a system for ongoing funding and support for nature based tourism resources, including managing and protecting national parks and reserves and other conservation areas.
- Develop a monitoring program to assess sustainability of nature based tourism activities.

Infrastructure

- Establish adequate and appropriate tourism infrastructure on public and other lands.
- Develop models of ecologically sustainable tourism developments in natural areas.

The above aspects form the foundation for the following secondary strategies:-

Secondary Strategies

Product Development, Promotion and Marketing

- Produce quality promotional material that highlights Western Australia's natural advantage and ensure that tourism advertising and marketing strategies promote the State's outstanding natural features.
- Identify, develop and promote a range of nature based tourism opportunities that will stimulate the industry, provide quality experiences, and invite repeat visits.
- Encourage cooperation in the development of new products.
- Develop new marketing programmes, including a cooperative approach to marketing nature based products.
- Continue market research with an emphasis on nature based tourism.

Quality Products, Information and Services

- Develop and produce quality information, interpretation material and services to enhance experiences that engender appreciation and understanding of the State's natural values.

Integration and Cooperation

- Develop mechanisms to communicate, facilitate and coordinate nature based tourism enterprises that explain, enhance and sustain the benefits to local communities.

Investment

- Develop procedures that ensure optimum involvement in the development of nature based tourism opportunities available for investment.

Training, Assistance and Accreditation

- Develop and implement training programs that will assist in the delivery of quality products and encourage the adoption of tour operator accreditation programs.
- Investigate/minimise the impediments to developing and establishing a nature based tourism business.

NATURE BASED TOURISM CO-ORDINATION

A key issue in developing nature based tourism is to determine the roles of various government agencies, operators and tourism industry bodies in the planning, marketing and coordination of nature based tourism.

The role of the industry should be focused on promotion, marketing, product development, training, education and quality control. The role of Government should be to assist and facilitate these processes, to assist with and regulate access, provide essential infrastructure and provide land management, monitoring and planning. The level of resourcing allocated to fulfilling these roles must be adequate to ensure sustainability of nature based tourism activities.

Much of the coordination for nature based tourism, both within industry and the Government, can be achieved under the activities and processes associated with tourism industry coordination.

THE ROLE OF THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

Many Government agencies impact on the pace of tourism growth, however, the key agencies are the Western Australian Tourism Commission and the Department of Conservation and Land Management and Regional Development Commissions.

Western Australian Tourism Commission (WATC)

The WATC's mission is to accelerate sustainable development of the tourism industry for the longer term social and economic benefits of the State.

Successful marketing of the Western Australian nature based tourism experience will rely on effective cooperation of marketing initiatives of the tourism operators, industry associations, State and Federal Government authorities, local government and local communities.

The WATC has recognised that much of the State's tourism product differentiation revolves around its natural attractions and the marketing of the State will further accentuate these aspects.

The WATC will also work with developers and local communities to ensure that facilities fit the local environment and that a sustainable ethic is fostered for tourism development around the State.

The WATC supports the orderly development of the industry in addition to providing many marketing opportunities for the industry.

Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM)

CALM also plays a vital role in fostering and assisting in the growth of nature based tourism. CALM is supportive of the development of a sustainable nature based tourism industry in this State, and sees this industry as an essential partner in achieving its conservation objectives.

On behalf of the National Park and Nature Conservation Authority (the statutory body in which the conservation estate is vested), CALM manages 20 million hectares of public lands and waters in Western Australia (7.5% of total area) which contain many of the State's nature based tourism attractions. CALM is also responsible for the care and management of the State's native plants and animals.

CALM can assist in developing nature based tourism opportunities by identifying areas of special interest, develop cooperative relationships with tour operators, facilitate tourism access in ways that protect our natural assets, and assist in the siting and landscaping of tourism infrastructure. By providing access to the conservation estate and adding the opportunity to learn about and understand our unique environment, CALM can assist in developing world-class tourism products.

The key ways CALM can assist in the development and management of a nature based tourism industry are:-

- provide controlled access to well managed natural environments in accordance with area management plans and other statutory requirements;
- assist to develop a Code of Ethics and any subsequent Government and industry recognised accreditation scheme for tourism operators;
- develop and maintain high quality facilities and services that reflect the definitions outlined above;
- develop quality information, education and interpretive material and programs on Western Australia's key natural areas and wildlife;
- improve on the already high standard of visitor service to ensure a high level of visitor satisfaction;
- assist to establish and deliver training and education programs for tour operators;
- participate in developing regional and local tourism strategies;
- assist the WATC to promote and market programs for nature based tourism products;
- identify opportunities for nature based tourism activities and development on CALM managed lands and waters;
- identify ways of improving the security of nature based tourism enterprises.
- monitoring the effects of nature based tourism on natural ecosystem and features.

Regional Development Commissions

Regional Development Commissions have a key role in promoting and facilitating the economic and social development of regions within Western Australia. The nature based tourism role is to identify regional resources and zones of opportunity, develop

regional land-use plans and assist local communities with tourism plans, provide and attract funding for tourism projects to maximise regional opportunities, and facilitate infrastructure development, tourism studies and tourism monitoring.

Ministry of Planning

The Ministry of Planning has a key role in incorporating tourism planning issues into regional plans and policy development.

Department of Fisheries

The Department of Fisheries is responsible for sustaining resources for commercial and recreational fishing. This is achieved through monitoring of fish stocks and regulation of fishing activities using mechanisms such as licensing and size and bag limits. Significant development of marine-based tourism, as is currently being experienced in Western Australia, has the potential to impact on the State's fisheries resources.

Department of Transport

The Department of Transport has an essential role in providing transport facilities and services and planning and implementing transport safety provisions that are fundamental to the growth of nature based tourism in Western Australia. One of the key features of nature based tourism in Western Australia is the remoteness and inaccessibility of many of the key attractions. The development of sustainable transport systems to overcome these problems is vital to the growth potential of the industry.

Westrail

Westrail plays an important role in providing and maintaining rail infrastructure and public transport services.

Western Australian Museum

The Western Australian Museum and its regional centres play a key role in education and interpretation of our natural history, and in collecting information on the State's wildlife. The Museum has the potential to develop a range of quality ecotourism experiences.

Other Government agencies

A number of other State and Commonwealth Government agencies have a role to play in supporting nature based tourism, including Main Roads Western Australia, The Department of Environmental Protection, The Department of Resources Development, The Water Authority of Western Australia, Western Power, the Department of Training, the Ministry of Sport and Recreation, Commonwealth Department of Tourism, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Authority, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the Aboriginal Economic Development Office and the Department of Land Administration.

THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

Local government authorities play a key role in providing services and facilities to support nature based tourism development. Local government can have a major influence on tourism development through land zoning, licensing, rating procedures, health and building regulations and the provision of local infrastructure. Tourism and nature based tourism can be facilitated by incorporating tourism into strategic and local plans.

Local community involvement in planning for tourism development will be influenced significantly by the initiatives of local government.

THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Without the private sector there can be no tourism industry.

Government fully recognises the vital role played by industry in providing the customer with enriching, exciting and unique tourism experiences while at the same time earning just economic rewards.

Also, organisations such as the Royal Automobile Club of WA (RAC) play a vital role in the distribution of information.

The input of the private sector into this Strategy has been vital.

The industry must continue to be a key partner in shaping the direction of nature based tourism in Western Australia with key roles in:

- determining outcomes for the direction the industry should take;
- assisting in shaping policy and influencing government to develop a viable nature based tourism industry;
- monitoring the direction and activities occurring within the industry and taking appropriate action; and
- developing an effective industry framework/body that is fully representative of the nature based tourism industry. The Victorian Tour Operators Association is a leading example of the positive benefits of having a strong industry organisation representing grass-roots tourism.

While one or two regional tourism bodies are well developed, the industry needs to foster tourism industry involvement at a regional and sub-regional level. Effective structures need to be developed to foster regional tourism of which nature based tourism would be an integral part.

Because the industry is currently independent and essentially uncoordinated, the establishment of effective industry representation and coordination will require some commitment of resources and direction from both Government and the tourism industry.

Western Australia's FACET (Forum Advocating Cultural and Eco-Tourism) has been established since 1992 and is an industry group which may be a suitable body through which government and local authorities can work at a coordinating level.

Infrastructure established on non-public lands and through the private development of resources often provides the only access available for nature based tourism experiences in some areas.

Aboriginal lands also contain many cultural and nature based assets which may be accessible to the mutual benefit of local communities and outside operators.

SECTION 3 - ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, REFERENCES AND APPENDICES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This plan was prepared for the Western Australian Tourism Commission by the Nature based Tourism Advisory Committee. The Committee comprises Mr Kevin Harrison (chair), Mr Harry Butler, Mr George King, Mr Brian Fitzpatrick, Ms Sally Buxton, Dr Ross Field, Dr Syd Shea, Ms Jo Dallimore, Mrs Pat Barblett, Dr Arthur Weston, Ms Christine Foster and Ms Jean Paton. This draft was based on original papers prepared by Mr Harry Butler.

Technical advice and coordination was provided by staff from the WATC and the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM), including Mr Jim Sharp, Mr Colin Ingram and Mr Hamish Crawford of CALM and Mr Terry McVeigh, Mr Eugene Stankevicius, Mr Shane Porter and Mr Steve Crawford from the WATC.

Special thanks to Mr Richard Grant for editing the strategy and Ms Denise Hamilton for typing. Design and typesetting by Morris Brown.

REFERENCES

Anon, (1992) Cultural Tourism, Economic and Educational Tourism News, Handbook/ Index and Network Number Three : Ecotourism. A Sense of Place, Victoria, Australia.

Australian Bureau of Statistics, (1993/94). Overseas Arrivals and Departures (Table 13). Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.

Australian Bureau of Statistics, (1994). Monthly Summary of Statistics (WA), Western Australia.

Australian Bureau of Statistics, (1994). Labour Force Estimates (WA), Western Australia.

Australian Nature Conservation Agency, (1994). Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.

Bureau of Tourism Research (1992). Japanese visitors and the Australian Environment. BTR Occasional Paper No. 9, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.

Bureau of Tourism Research (1993). International Visitor Survey, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.

Bureau of Tourism Research (1993/94). Domestic Tourism Monitor, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.

Centre for International Economics (CIE), (1988). Tourism Report - Economic Effects of International Tourism. Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.

Commonwealth Department of Tourism, (1994). National Ecotourism Strategy, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.

Coopers and Lybrand, (1994). Issues Paper. Towards a Western Australian Tourism Strategy, WATC, Perth, Western Australia.

Valentine, P (1991). Tourism and Nature Conservation: A Definition with some Recent Developments in Micronesia. In: Ecotourism incorporating the global classroom (B.

Weiler ed). pp 4-9 Bureau of Tourism Research, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.

Waters, Somerset R (1994). Travel Industry World Yearbook - The Big Picture 1994-95.

Western Australian Tourism Commission (WATC), (1989). Eco Ethics of Tourism Development, Perth, Western Australia.

World Travel & Tourism Council, (1994). The 1993 WTTC Report Research Edition - Travel & Tourism Forecasts.

APPENDICES

CODE OF ETHICS

ALL ENVIRONMENTS

1. A tourism development (whatever its scale) dependant on the natural environment should enable visitors to enjoy it without degrading it, and should increase their appreciation and understanding so that they can develop an instant but long-lasting sense of awareness, oneness and involvement with the environment.
2. Every tourism development that relies on natural environmental features should be designed so as to emphasise, as far as practicable, the highest degree of positive, creative interaction with those natural features and the highest degree of respect for natural forces.
3. In planning, development and operation of a tourism project, rapport and empathy with the site should be developed, and its ambience maintained and enhanced harmoniously.
4. Tourism developers should view the environment not as an undesirable constraint but as a positive challenge to their professional ability to work ingeniously and constructively in harmony with the millennia of work that preceded them.
5. The size and scale of a tourism development should be planned carefully right from the outset with the environment as a critical limiting component, so as to ensure that even in its final form it does not exceed the carrying capacity of the local environment.
6. In its final form, a tourism development shall not reduce the environmental attractiveness of the vicinity, and during construction any adverse environmental effects should be minimal and shorter.
7. Developers should take account of local community attitudes and feelings, including the way that a local unaltered environment contributes to a community's sense of place. Developers should take such actions as necessary (briefings, meetings, displays - including examples of comparable developments if available) to avoid polarisation, which can cause unfruitful confrontation between the developer and non-supportive elements of the local community.
8. The development should not lessen enjoyment of the local environment by the local community and, where practicable, should enhance it.
9. It is essential to view the environmental implications and consequences of large developments in a regional sense, and of small developments in the light of their possible cumulative effects.
10. The tourism developer has a joint responsibility with the Government's environmental managers to accept the potential synergism of tourism and environment, and without diminishing safeguards, to examine proactively the characteristics of each site in order to enhance the environment with a sympathetic tourism development.
11. Those involved in tourism at all levels and on all scales, should accompany their entrepreneurial activities with promotion of environmental awareness and accurate understanding, knowing that by doing so they can lessen their management costs while enhancing their visitors' enjoyment.
12. The production of accurate informative brochures on environmental matters in specific areas should be encouraged.
13. Tourists, particularly in remote areas, should be encouraged to "tread lightly on our land", while "taking nothing but photographs and leaving nothing but footprints".

14. Tourism developers and promoters should foster in their management and employees a sense of environmental awareness, enjoyment and accurate understanding, through staff development programs.
15. A tourism development should bear an ongoing responsibility for environmental protection, including assessments and management. While taking responsible advantage of the resilience of much of the natural environment, developers should nurture it, maintain it and avoid depreciation, because it, unlike most of the plant and equipment, is often irreplaceable.
16. A tourism development should recognise that there was a valid spectrum of land-use values and allocations before its involvement. Any extension of recreational opportunities should not distort the range of fundamental land-use values, particularly towards the primitive and wilderness end of the spectrum.
17. In all aspects of a tourism development a systematic attempt must be made to follow relevant broad conservation policies. For example conservation of water and energy should be encouraged as should retention of native vegetation, prevention of soil degradation and preservation of native fauna.
18. In all aspects of a tourism development, a systematic attempt should be made to minimise pollution in any form, particularly in rural and remote areas where the scale of the development may make its operations a model for the local community.

BEACHES AND OCEAN FRONTAGE

19. Tourism developments along the coast should be planned to confirm with nodal patterns of development and access, so as to localise and efficiently manage environmental consequences, while at the same time minimising diffusion of capital expenditure.
20. The location, scale and form of coastal developments should be in harmony with their uniquely sensitive environment. Car parks, roads and ancillary services need to be part of a coherent, long-range plan to a higher degree of necessity and early forward planning than may be the case in areas less environmentally fragile.
21. A marina or similar development must be in dynamic harmony and equilibrium with the powerful forces that affect both sea and shore.
22. The right of public access to beaches and ocean frontage should be maintained, provided it is done in an equitable and environmentally responsible manner.
23. There should preferably be no man-made structures such as roads between a beach-based tourist development and the beach, for the twin reasons of having the tourism development in harmony with the coastal ambience as desired, and to avoid roads intruding into the dune system on either side of the development.
24. Beachfront tourism developments separated from the sea by vegetation, should be planned to include limited access paths, which pedestrians are influenced to use by gentle constraints over other access routes, in order to minimise and manage any impacts on the vegetation.
25. As a general policy, a development based in a sand-dune area should be set back sufficiently far so as not to intrude into either the visual coherence of the frontal dunes or their environmental stability. Subject to specific site discussions, the set-back might be in the order of 100 metres from the seawards first line of stable vegetation.

REMOTE ENVIRONMENTS

26. In remote environments, the overwhelming guideline is to minimise traces of one's visit, so that the next visitor should be able to look at the scene and imagine being the first to view it.
27. Most remote tourism ventures concerned with native flora and fauna are best if they provide for small parties and intense personal participation, so as to maximise participation but minimise perturbation.
28. Tourism developments, especially in remote areas, should provide locally-knowledgeable environmental experts and guides. Steps should be taken at appropriate levels to train or otherwise obtain the services of such experts.

FORESTS AND NATIONAL PARKS

29. In forests and other susceptible areas where bushfires may occur, the tourism developer should play a proactive educational role to prevent bushfires, both for self protection and for environmental protection.

30. Tourism developments should encourage revegetation with native species, and take all proper actions to guard against the uncontrolled intrusion of weeds and exotic species, as well as preventing the spread of pests and diseases.
31. Any responsible tourism development permitted within a national park should recognise its special privilege, and should specially enhance community enjoyment of the park in ways otherwise unattainable. It should extend the solace offered by the park's natural beauty and conservation features, without detracting from those features.

PASTORAL LEASES

32. On pastoral leases, there can be a mix of tourism and pastoral activity with different types of land uses and environmental loadings, but the basic need to prevent overuse or overloading the carrying capacity remains unaltered.

WATERWAYS AND WETLANDS

33. River and estuarine systems depend for much of their appeal on environmental qualities of purity and flowing form. Any tourism uses should be entirely sympathetic to those features, and especially aware of the biological and physical sensitivity of such areas under environmental stress, which is most likely to be encountered in the South West in hot weather when stress by tourism use is greatest.
34. The rights of downstream river users - and the natural environment is one of those users - ethically include all environmental qualities and elements.
35. Wetlands are an important environmental resource which are becoming increasingly scarce in the face of land developments which may involve drainage and land fill. Tourism developers should recognise that they are uniquely placed because they can develop new wetlands and improve old or sick wetlands in a proactive way, while understanding the important and delicately balanced biological and physical complex which is involved.
36. Developers wishing to exploit the possible tourist potential use of reservoirs and water catchment areas have a special responsibility to ensure that the purity and quality of the water is not thereby degraded.
37. Canal developments should be regarded as a way to create new aquatic environments and bring them to more of the community without harming (and preferably by enhancing) the existing natural aquatic environment. It should be accepted that such developments have an interrelationship with contiguous and exchanging waters that brings some added responsibility with it.

HERITAGE - OR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

38. Cultural heritage features such as significant buildings should be respected and early decisions made concerning their preservation as a record of past activities, and possibly incorporating them, or their essential features, into part of the fabric of tourism developments. Particular emphasis should be given to educational and interpretive signs.

NATIONAL PARKS

39. Any tourism development relating to a national park shall undertake the following subject to a long-term contract, whose conditions can only be varied by agreement say, by both Houses of Parliament:
 - i) It shall be located within the borders of the park only if the remoteness and scale of the park require local accommodation;
 - ii) Its activities and extensions must be compatible with the scale and nature of the park;
 - iii) It must not detract from enjoyment of the park by the general community;
 - iv) It must contribute, in cash or in kind, to the orderly operation and maintenance of the park;
 - v) It must be compatible in scale, architecture and general "mood" with the whole of the park;
 - vi) There must be some bond and other contractual agreement to ensure that it does not degrade in time so as to detract from the park;
 - vii) To the extent practicable, the developer and the Government should jointly plan auxiliary services, roads, toilets, etc.;
 - viii) The developer should actively assist in obtaining and spreading expert knowledge about the environmental delights of the park.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<i>Conservation</i>	'the management of human use of the biosphere so that it may yield the greatest sustainable benefit to present generations while maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations'. (National Conservation Strategy for Australia)
<i>Constant Attractions</i>	Attributes that are widespread or have an intangible quality about them (eg. good weather, safety, etc.).
<i>Development</i>	'the modification of the biosphere and the application of human, financial, living and non-living resources to satisfy human needs and improve the quality of human life'. (World Conservation Strategy)
<i>Ecologically Sustainable Development</i>	'Using, conserving and enhancing the community's resources so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are maintained and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be increased'. (Ecologically Sustainable Development Working Groups 1991)
<i>Ecotourism</i>	Ecotourism is one segment of nature based tourism that includes an educational component and is managed to be sustainable.
<i>Endemic Tourism</i>	Broadly defined as tourism which recognises: a. that each individual locality or community has its special character, and b. that particular character or identity may well constitute its major attractiveness to tourists.
<i>Environment</i>	'All aspects of the surroundings of human beings as individuals or in social groups'. (Commonwealth Environmental Protection [IOP] Amendment No 12, 1987)
<i>Interpretation</i>	An educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, first hand experience and illustrative media, rather than simply by communicating factual information.
<i>Natural</i>	Existing in or formed by nature.
<i>Tourism Industry</i>	'the collection of all collaborating firms and organisations which provide services and perform specific activities directed at satisfying the particular needs of tourists'. (Stear, Buckley and Stankey, 1989)
<i>Particular Attractions</i>	Attractions that are not in themselves unique, however have a high intrinsic value to particular areas of the State. (eg. Stirling Ranges)
<i>Tourists</i>	'all visitors travelling for whatever purpose involving at least an overnight stay 40 km from their usual place of residence'. (World Tourism Organisation)
<i>User Pays</i>	The principle that management and maintenance costs for individual parks should be borne (either partially or fully) by those using them.
<i>Zones of Opportunity</i>	Is a geographic area that ideally encompasses an endemic core resource, as well as complementary resources and/or attractions.

MAKING A SUBMISSION

**Submissions are welcome until
15 September 1995.**

Make sure your submission is received on time and that your name and address are clearly stated at the top of your submission.

WHERE TO SEND YOUR SUBMISSION

Please consider the strategy carefully and send your written comments to:

**Nature Based Tourism Strategy
Policy, Planning & Development Division
Western Australian Tourism Commission
GPO Box X2261
Perth WA 6001**