Successful Tourism at Heritage Places

A GUIDE FOR TOURISM OPERATORS
HERITAGE MANAGERS AND COMMUNITIES

AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE COMMISSION
INDUSTRY SCIENCE RESOURCES
crc Sustainable Tourism
crctourism.com.au

Foreword

The Australian Heritage Commission (AHC) and the Department of Industry, Science and Resources, with the assistance of the Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism (CRC) have over several years explored issues of common concern about the responsible use of Australia's heritage places for tourism.

We have aimed to move beyond general notions of the incompatibility of tourism and heritage conservation toward emphasising the potential contributions that tourism can make. Discussions over the last few years have demonstrated that impacts can often be managed effectively. There is much common ground and great potential for benefits all round.

In this guide we have provided information to help people more clearly understand the issues involved and have developed some practical pointers for those aiming for successful and responsible tourism at heritage places. We hope this guide is a useful springboard for you.

Developing this guide

In 1998, the Australian Heritage Commission and the Department of Industry, Science and Resources identified the need to develop guidelines for tourism where heritage places are involved. This followed recognition that there needed to be a stronger bridge between tourism industry codes of practice and heritage conservation principles.

A steering committee was established (see Acknowledgments) and the National Centre for Tourism was employed to produce a draft document in 1999. This final document has resulted from submissions from tourism operators, heritage managers and community groups across Australia. The document incorporates key elements of international and national tourism research, strategies, guidelines and codes of practice (see Section 7).

At any time, we appreciate feedback on the content of the guide and hearing of people's experience in applying the principles and guidelines to their work. You can email us at ahc@ea.gov.au. A major review of the contents of this guide is planned for 2005.

If you require further advice or assistance on heritage or tourism issues in your area, as a first port of call, contact the heritage and tourism agencies in your State/Territory.

NICHOLAS HALL

AUSTRALIAN TOURIST COMMISSION

Contents

Introduction

Australia's heritage, shaped by nature and history, is an inheritance passed from one generation to the next. It encompasses many things — a diversity of natural and cultural places, lifestyles, traditions, objects, history and values. Heritage helps us understand our past, the Australian landscape and what makes us who we are.

Heritage places are a fundamental part of Australia's tourism industry. Domestic and overseas tourists want to experience the distinctive natural, Indigenous and historic heritage places and the rich stories associated with them.

Successful tourism at heritage places involves:

- recognising the importance of heritage places;
- looking after them;
- developing mutually beneficial partnerships;
- incorporating heritage issues in business planning;
- investing in people and place;
- marketing and promoting products responsibly;
- providing high quality visitor experiences;
- respecting Indigenous rights and obligations.

These key elements of success are further described in the principles and guidelines which follow, and are illustrated in a practical way in the case studies.

NORTHERN TERRITORY TOURIST COMMISSION

WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

This guide has been designed for tourism operators, heritage managers, communities and others who need to understand the issues involved in the relationship between tourism and heritage places.

Local governments, development associations, tourism planners, policy makers and interpretation professionals will all find useful material in this guide to enable them to work effectively together. Included are practical suggestions for existing and intending operators in both the tourism and heritage sectors who wish to better service the needs of visitors while protecting the future of places which have natural, Indigenous and historic significance.

This guide can be used by many different people in different ways, for example:

- A tourism operator can use it to improve their product, ensure heritage protection and more effectively work with others.
- A heritage manager can use it to get a better picture of the tourism issues involved as a framework to plan policies, standards and strategies for tourism at heritage places.
- People looking to develop a new business, attraction or product based on heritage places can use it to generate ideas, build support and strengthen applications for funding.
- A local community, regional development association or local government may want to more effectively use the heritage assets found in their region as tourist attractions. The guide can be used as a basis for discussions, meetings and developing local and regional strategies.
- Policy makers can use the document as a reference point for the future development of tourism in Australia where heritage issues need to be considered.

AUSTRALIAN TOURIST COMMISSION

Research conducted in 2000 into the economic benefits of heritage tourism at three historic mining towns (Maldon in Victoria, Burra in South Australia and Charters Towers in Queensland) showed that visitors spent $99–$109 each day in the town and its surrounding region, adding $4.2–$6.1 million to the annual gross regional product.

Economic value of tourism to places of cultural heritage significance, 2001

TOURISM TASMANIA

TOURISM AT HERITAGE PLACES

Activities and services which provide international and domestic visitors with the opportunity to experience, understand and enjoy the special values of Australia's heritage are sometimes referred to as heritage tourism. Recognition of the significance of heritage assets, and ensuring their long-term protection, is essential for sustainable and appropriate tourism.

Visiting heritage places can be part of a range of activities undertaken by tourists or it can be the sole reason for travel for people with a high level of interest in natural and cultural heritage. Specialist ecotourism, nature-based tourism, adventure tourism, Indigenous tourism, historic or cultural tourism products all often involve heritage places. Tourism to heritage places often works very effectively in combination with other specialist tourism products such as food and wine tourism.

Half of all international tourists and the majority of domestic tourists visit national parks.

During their stay in Australia 60% of international tourists visit a cultural attraction.

Cultural Tourism in Australia, 1998

In 1994, a regional study in western New South Wales identified considerable potential for heritage tourism growth. Following this, a wholly-owned Aboriginal business, Harry Nanya Tours, was established. It tested and developed a wide range of different tours, covering natural, Indigenous and historic heritage themes. Harry Nanya Tours now employs 23 Indigenous and three non-Indigenous people, and the business has grown from a turnover of 15.2 passengers per month in 1996-97 to 1200 per month in 1999-2000.

Undara Experience is a family-operated tourism business established in the late 1980s adjacent to the Undara Volcanic National Park in Queensland. The Collins family surrendered part of their lease to the National Park to more effectively protect the series of spectacular tunnels through which once flowed molten lava. The family established the Undara Lava Lodge, and made a legal agreement with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to give Undara Experience sole rights to run commercial tours in the lava tubes. They also joined the Savannah Guides Network, assisting them to achieve high standards in interpretation and management.

Tourism and Protected Areas: Partnerships in Principle and Practice, 2000

GULF SAVANNAH GUIDES

Understanding Perspectives

Successful tourism at heritage places depends on understanding the different perspectives of tourism operators, heritage managers and communities and then establishing common ground, building relationships and forming partnerships.

Some of the issues for these three groups are considered in this section.

TOURISM OPERATORS

The tourism industry is driven mainly by private enterprise, and has the prime motivation of generating profit. An operator is under constant pressure to run a business and serve customers.

Major constraints on tourism operators include access to the places they want to visit and access to markets for their product. Operators are dependent on a market that can have strong seasonal variation and defined requirements around holiday periods and events. Operators need a great deal of certainty in access, timing and facilities, for there are commercial expectations of reliable and efficient service delivery to domestic and international clients.

Heritage places can provide key destinations and attractions which can be marketed effectively to draw and hold market segments, and around which other products can be developed.

Some major issues for tourism operators are the:

- need to make a profit;
- need for a competitive advantage over other products;
- size of investment required and difficulties in raising finance;
- cost of establishing and managing operations;
- long lead time to receive approvals;
- long lead time to foster and develop a target market (particularly an international market) and reach profitability;
- cost of providing service infra-structure in remote locations; and
- cost of continuing to develop and service markets.

AHC COLLECTION

HERITAGE MANAGERS

Heritage managers have a primary duty, often enshrined in their enabling legislation, to protect and conserve the places under their control. There may also be statutory requirements to examine the impacts of proposed activities or developments.

Indigenous custodians have cultural obligations to places based in customary law from which stem their management responsibilities.

Because of the fragility of a place, its significance or other management issues, public access to heritage places is not always appropriate or may have to be restricted or modified.

Heritage managers often have obligations and a strong ethic of providing for public access, recreation and education around the places in their care. Public safety and liability are also prime considerations.

Responsibility for information about places, the way places are described and what information is conveyed to visitors, is often seen as an important part of a heritage manager's duty of care.

Some major issues for heritage managers in relation to tourism are:

- tension between the need to protect places and the pressure to provide for public access;
- pressure for scant resources for conservation to be diverted to managing tourism;
- assessment of the impacts tourism might have on places, and fears for impacts that may be difficult to predict or plan for;
- sensitivity regarding information about the location of, and directions to, heritage sites to which public access may be undesirable or unsuitable;
- the effect that increased use will have on surrounding areas;
- the effect of visitors on wildlife and vegetation;
- the physical capacity of places to handle visitors;
- cumulative effects of tourism growth over time;
- the need to provide visitor facilities;
- decrease in the quality of visitor experience;
- fears of loss of control of interpretation and inaccuracy and manipulation of messages;
- effect and influence of volunteers and sponsors on the management of a place; and
- the cultural and intellectual property implications of tourism, such as respect for sensitive information, copyright and use of images in marketing and promotion.

ENVIRONMENT AUSTRALIA COLLECTION

THE COMMUNITY

Many heritage sites are highly valued by local and regional communities which are naturally protective of these places. Communities may be keen to develop tourism but also may be protective of their privacy and wary of the effects that tourism might have. For this reason it is important to establish early the needs, interests and aspirations of the local community.

Local communities should be consulted about the planning, development and operation of tourism projects based on heritage places. Their active involvement in all planning processes will help ensure that the tourism operation is not only sensitive to community aims and aspirations, but will be able to capture and reflect the essence of the place and its people.

Success in engaging and involving the community will often lead to success in attracting visitor markets. The best ambassadors and sales people for any heritage tourism operation are often local residents. If local residents have an active involvement in tourism initiatives they will be in a better position to not only pass this knowledge on to visitors, relations and friends but to take an active role in volunteer and support groups.

No community or heritage place is the same as the next. The specific needs of each place and community must be addressed. Open consultation and partnerships are the best way to seek positive engagement with local needs.

Major issues from a community perspective are:

- whether the visitor attraction is presenting a local community perspective;
- whether community leaders have been identified and actively consulted;
- whether religious or cultural sensitivities associated with the use or presentation of heritage places have been adequately taken into account;
- how local people can take an active role in negotiating the presentation, management and operation of the attraction;
- how benefits for local people can be maximised;
- how negative impacts can be reduced or ameliorated.

AHC COLLECTION

BUILDING ON COMMON GROUND

While tourism operators, heritage managers and communities have their own views and needs, there is a broad range of common interest and great potential for mutual benefit.

Of common interest to all are providing appropriate public access, presenting and protecting the significance of places, and the need for sustainability — sustainability for businesses, for heritage places, and for the community.

Tourism is important for heritage managers

It helps meet requirements to provide public access, recreational opportunities and to raise awareness of the value of natural and cultural heritage. Well-informed tourists are more willing to act in ways which protect places and are more respectful and supportive of management programs. Tourism can help to augment scant resources to achieve conservation outcomes.

Tourism is important for communities

It provides additional income and employment, diversifies local economies, strengthens local identity and sense of purpose and can help protect and maintain the use of places which mean a great deal to local people.

Heritage and communities are important for tourism

They are the fundamental assets on which tourism is based.

There is much to be gained by combining commercial philosophy with traditional heritage conservation. I am in the business of developing a heritage tourism attraction at a locally and nationally-significant heritage place. The site is more than a heritage site because its central focus is to provide visitors with something to do in a tiny remote community and thus generate income from a fledgling tourism industry within the region.

Joanna Seczkowski, Battery Hill Mining Centre, Tennant Creek, NT
Spokesperson — Remote and Regional Museums Network

Principles

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These principles have been derived from the international and national context of sustainable practice in both tourism and heritage. They recognise that much of the groundwork has already been developed in international and national guidelines, charters and best-practice documents in both the tourism and heritage fields. The principles are important for tourism operators, heritage managers and others who are committed to responsible practice and a quality product.

PRINCIPLE 1

Recognise the importance of heritage places

A great deal of tourism relies on places with natural, Indigenous and historic significance as fundamental assets on which tourism products are based.

Recognising, describing, understanding and communicating significance is an essential part of heritage conservation and responsible tourism at heritage places. Understanding significance makes good business sense for tourism — it is one of the key selling points for products.

Tourism needs to be planned carefully to be appropriate to the significance of a place. Tourism will not be an option for some heritage places where it is incompatible with the significance or management objectives of a place.

In order to respect the cultural significance of places, people involved in tourism need to be sensitive to, and directly involve, cultural groups who have a special interest in them.

PRINCIPLE 2

Look after heritage places

Heritage conservation is a concern of responsible tourism. It ensures the long-term protection of heritage assets.

The aim of heritage conservation is to retain the natural and cultural significance of places. Each heritage place or area has its own particular significance and requirements for conservation.

It is the responsibility of people planning tourism activities at heritage places to take all reasonable steps to avoid impact on the natural and cultural significance of a place.

PRINCIPLE 3

Develop mutually beneficial partnerships

Developing active partnerships, alliances and open lines of communication between tourism operators, site managers, other businesses, local communities and Indigenous people is the best way to build a sustainable tourism operation.

Success depends on building relationships and, where appropriate, forming partnerships of benefit to both tourism and heritage.

Working with local people in the management, presentation and operation of tourism activities will foster ownership and understanding and contribute to positive outcomes for the visitor attraction and local community.

Developing partnerships with Indigenous custodians is crucial in the case of presenting Indigenous heritage.

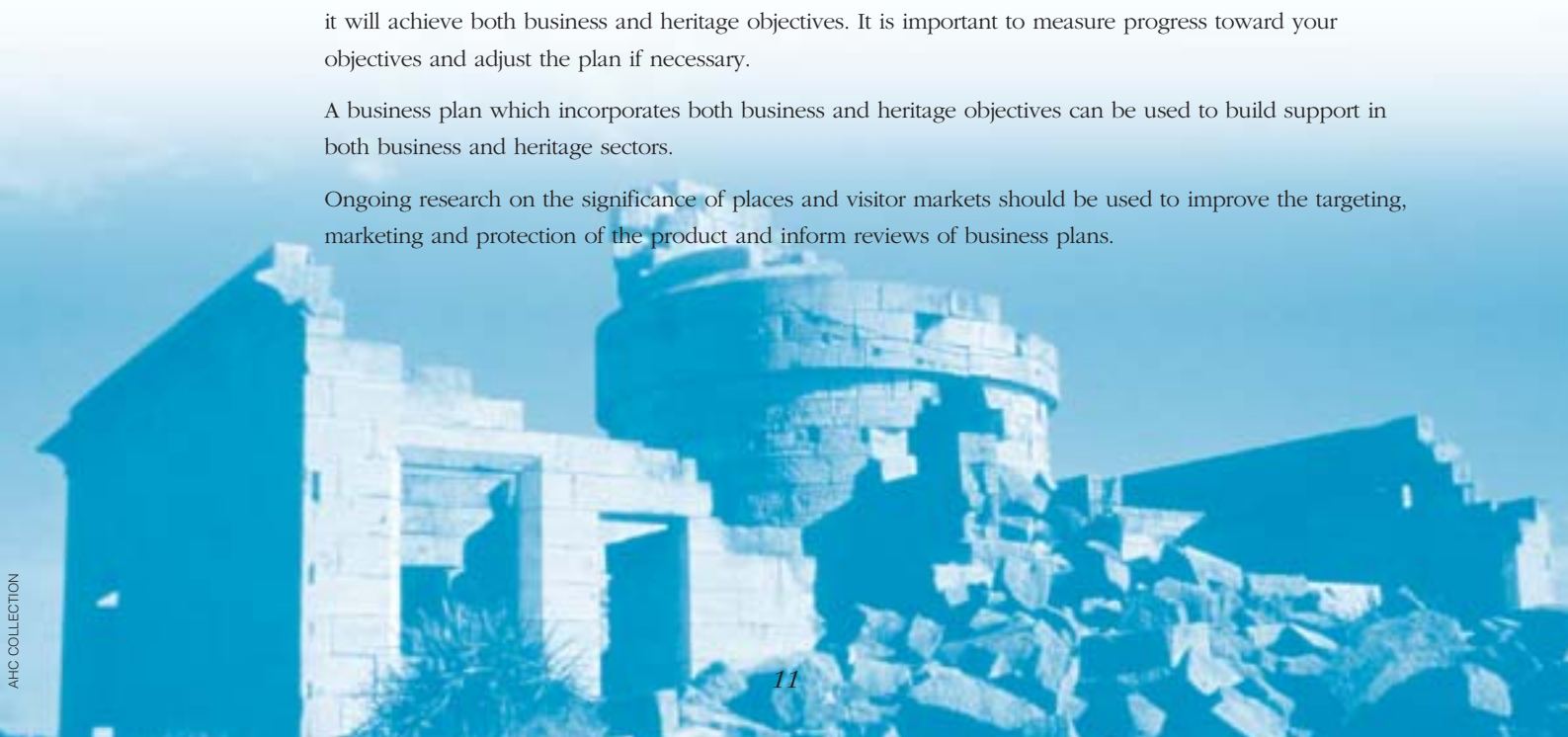
PRINCIPLE 4

Incorporate heritage issues into business planning

As with all business operations, sound business planning is the essential foundation of a successful heritage tourism operation. A business plan will clearly establish the nature and purpose of the operation and how it will achieve both business and heritage objectives. It is important to measure progress toward your objectives and adjust the plan if necessary.

A business plan which incorporates both business and heritage objectives can be used to build support in both business and heritage sectors.

Ongoing research on the significance of places and visitor markets should be used to improve the targeting, marketing and protection of the product and inform reviews of business plans.



AHC COLLECTION

PRINCIPLE 5

Invest in people and place

Tourism involving heritage places should contribute to both the conservation of heritage assets and to the economic and social well-being of local communities.

Strategies which bring mutual benefits can be developed to benefit the place, the people involved and the local and regional community.

These can include increasing use of local goods and services, providing corporate contributions to conservation initiatives, technical assistance, training and education programs, direct involvement in management or upgrade of visitor facilities, improved visitor understanding of the significance of a place, or helping to achieve other goals that the local community supports.

PRINCIPLE 6

Market and promote products responsibly

The significance of heritage places can be the basis for product definition in marketing and promotion. The marketing and promotion of heritage places needs to recognise and respect their identified significance and the wishes of local communities — and not create unrealistic visitor expectations.

A balance needs to be found between meeting tourism needs for marketing, promotion and product positioning, heritage needs such as planning for the future use of places and appropriate use of images and the needs of visitors for accurate information.

Successful marketing and promotion are best achieved through strategic partnerships across tourism and heritage interests at local, regional, State/Territory, national and international levels.

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PRINCIPLE 7

Provide high quality visitor experiences

Providing an enjoyable and enriching experience for visitors is the goal of everyone involved in heritage tourism. A common understanding of visitor needs and motivations by tourism operators and heritage managers is the basis for providing high quality visitor experiences.

High customer satisfaction is achieved through providing enjoyment for visitors, along with understanding of a place. Attention to detail and a commitment to high quality in the planning of activities, staff training, interpretation and provision of facilities and services will generate positive effects for both businesses and heritage places.

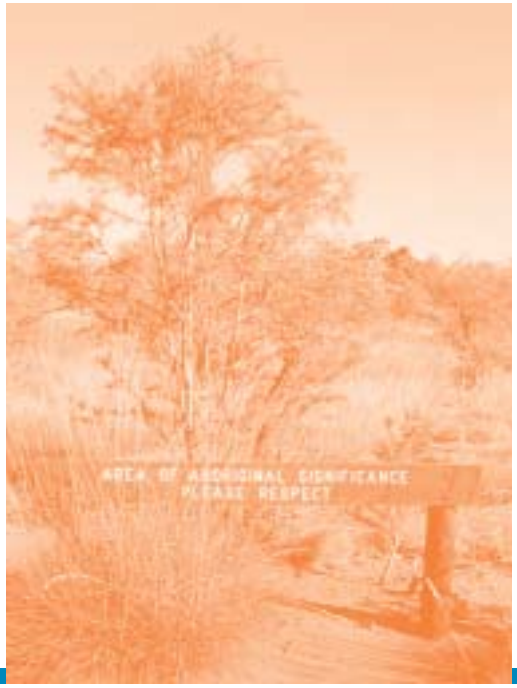
PRINCIPLE 8

Respect Indigenous rights and obligations

Indigenous people have cultural obligations to look after their country and special places. They are the primary sources of information about the significance of their places.

When the cultural significance of the place has been established, the objectives and operating guidelines for tourism should be widely discussed and agreed upon with the relevant Indigenous community.

Respect for cultural protocols and control of intellectual property is required with regard to access to sites, disclosure of sensitive information, and the use of designs, photographs, performances and objects.



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Guidelines

TOURISM QUEENSLAND

The following guidelines provide practical assistance for people wanting to incorporate heritage tourism principles and practices in their operation or area. They reflect established codes of practice and are directed toward the needs of operators as indicated by research and consultation.

Each guideline deals with specific issues and represents current best practice. To make the most of the guidelines, you may need to adapt and fine-tune them to apply to your operation or local needs.

The dynamic nature of the tourism industry and the need to seek continual improvement in tourism products and heritage management mean that the guidelines will need to be revised over time as experience grows.

THE GUIDELINES

Guideline 1

UNDERSTANDING HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

What is heritage significance?

Heritage places are one part of heritage along with other aspects such as traditions, oral history, songs, dances and objects. Heritage enables us to tell stories about the land and its people.

A heritage place can be a small, specific feature such as an Aboriginal shell midden, a geological outcrop or a historic building, or a larger landscape such as river catchment or national park. Individual features may be linked with related places elsewhere, and form part of a broader cultural landscape.

Places that are part of our heritage are considered to have heritage significance. Significance is the way the special and unique qualities of a place are described and summarised. This can be in local, regional, national and international terms. It does not just describe the biggest and the best, it also helps describe the more subtle and complex natural and cultural characteristics of places.

What makes a place significant may not be immediately apparent. It may be significant for the response it evokes in people or for the associations that people might have with it. It may have high aesthetic, social, religious or symbolic values. The significance may be represented in the knowledge people hold, and expressed in artworks, songs and stories.

Places usually possess many different values. For example, the vast landscape of Kakadu contains important ecosystems, sites of great Aboriginal spiritual significance, world-renowned rock paintings, places of spectacular aesthetic beauty and interesting historic features. Understanding this complex heritage place means recognising all elements and respecting all values.

Why understanding significance is important for tourism

The chance to experience something unique, beautiful, rare, authentic or of great cultural significance provides a strong appeal for tourists.

The market appeal of heritage places is related to, and can be closely linked to, their recognised heritage significance. Significance can be one of the key selling points for tourism products. The advantages of having a clear understanding of significance are:

- operators can develop unique and more sophisticated products tailored to visitor interest. This can help differentiate what one product is offering in relation to others;
- communicating significance effectively to customers helps operators deliver a more enriching experience, helps operators achieve higher customer satisfaction and promotes support for heritage conservation; and
- heritage managers and tourism operators can think more carefully about what is appropriate and make sure that the important values of a place are not adversely affected.

There is no direct physical evidence of Captain Cook's landing at the town of Seventeen Seventy on Queensland's central coast, but the place's association with this important historical event gives it heritage significance.

BUNDABERG DISTRICT TOURISM AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Finding out about heritage significance

The significance of a heritage place may already be documented in reports, management plans, books, articles or listings on heritage registers. The first step is to find out what is already known by talking to heritage managers, Indigenous people, local government and heritage enthusiasts in the local community. As you do this, keep a record of the names and contact details of people you have talked to for future reference.

Existing information about the heritage significance of places is often held in heritage registers. A starting point for looking for these is to contact a natural or cultural heritage agency in your state. You can also access this information on-line at www.heritage.gov.au, a portal for Australian heritage web sites, which contains information from many heritage registers around Australia.

The appearance of the temple of Hou Wang in Atherton, north Queensland, belies its significance. Built in 1903 by expatriate Chinese, it was used extensively for about 30 years, and then gradually allowed to fall into disrepair until 1979. The term 'temple' is possibly misleading, for it is simply a corrugated iron structure of modest size, bearing more resemblance externally to a farm shed than a place of worship. The property's significance was recognised by the National Trust of Queensland in the late 1970s, and it was acquired, along with the adjacent abandoned Chinatown site by donation from the owners, the Fong On family. Subsequent research established that the building was internationally significant for its rarity, the quality of the carved wooden fittings, its research value, and its association with a particular ethnic group of pioneer Australians. The temple is one of about four worldwide dedicated to Hou Wang, bodyguard commander to the last emperor of the Southern Sung dynasty. It is the only one known outside modern China. However, what is truly impressive is that it contains almost all of the original artefacts: from the bell cast in 1897, to the ornately carved wooden altar, resplendent with gold leaf finish.

Managing small heritage sites with interpretation and community involvement, 2000

AHC COLLECTION

Heritage professionals have developed ways of formally assessing the significance of natural and cultural heritage places which involves collecting and examining information, looking at like places, considering places against criteria and summarising what is known in a statement of significance. The statement of significance should reflect why the place is special to the community or groups within the community.

For Indigenous heritage, Indigenous people are the primary sources of information about the significance of their places, and they should have the opportunity to describe the cultural significance of their country.

For natural heritage, knowledge of habitats, ecosystem processes and the elements of geodiversity and biodiversity is crucial to establishing the significance of places.

For historic heritage, the significance of places is considered in the context of understanding local, regional and national history, how places relate to recognised themes (such as the *Australian Historic Themes Framework* — see References), and how the places compare to other like places.

It is important to remember that heritage significance is a judgement of a particular person or group, based on information available at the time. People have different perspectives on the importance of a place and views of heritage significance often change over time.

If an up-to-date statement of significance is not available, gather your own information and enlist the help of heritage managers, local communities, Indigenous owners and heritage professionals such as historians, architects, botanists, geologists and archaeologists. Up-to-date information will be an important resource for your operation.

Using heritage significance

From what is known about significance, you can now think how this information can be used effectively in a product, business or at a place. It might help to think about the following.

- What significant heritage places are there in an area?
- Would it be appropriate to take visitors to them?
- Does the significance alter how visitors should be shown this place, or should alternative places be used instead?
- How best to present the significance — for example having Aboriginal guides explaining significance in their own words.
- Are there themes related to these places which can be woven into a tourism product or interpretation?
- What elements of significance not widely known can be revealed and explored with visitors?
- How are places connected and how can this be used in a tour, heritage trail or on-site interpretation?
- Can or should different aspects of significance be emphasised for different groups?
- How can the special significance of a place or places be appropriately represented in marketing and promotion?

The following checklist may help you to get started to understand significance in your area:

- have all natural and cultural values been considered?
- is there a statement of significance?
- is the understanding of significance up-to-date?
- have I talked to all the key people who might know about significance?
- how can I use an understanding of significance more effectively in my operation?

NICHOLAS HALL

Guideline 2

FORMING PARTNERSHIPS

A partnership is an alliance in which both parties benefit. Partnerships of all types can help a heritage tourism operation be successful. They are almost essential, because they help build support, and tourism often requires resources that no one organisation can offer.

Partnerships may be between tourism operators and site managers, tourism operators and communities, tourism operators and Indigenous communities and between tourism operators and other businesses. Businesses can strategically cooperate to assist linking products with markets, assist in providing accommodation and transport or cooperate with marketing and promotion. In some cases, tourism operators will need to form a partnership with private landholders to gain access to heritage places.

Cooperating in a regional arrangement with others helps you pool resources, save money, expand marketing potential, share expertise or research and link with themes on a broader scale. Everyone stands to benefit from building a critical mass of interest in a region.

This guideline concentrates on partnerships between tourism interests and heritage managers.

Working with heritage managers

It makes good business and environmental sense for tourism operators to work cooperatively with both natural and cultural heritage site managers. A partnership that goes beyond the basic regulatory and licensing issues will deliver more benefits to business as well as to the heritage managers. In the first instance, cooperating with site managers should be part of a tour operator's business plan (see Guideline 5).

In many regions of Australia where there is Aboriginal land — for example Central Australia, Arnhem Land, Cape York Peninsula, and the Kimberley — Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders are the land or site managers. With products which involve Indigenous components, success often depends on effective partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants. More information on Indigenous tourism development is included in Guideline 4.

Tourism operators often have to work with natural area managers. These heritage managers can help in developing products, particularly the following:

- **Tour planning**: When planning an itinerary, natural area managers may be able to provide valuable information about peak times and when attractions are most suitable for visits by tour groups.
- **Interpretation**: Natural area managers can provide interpretive material about aspects of the park. In some instances park rangers may be able to conduct guest presentations and guide visitors through parts of the park.
- **Advice on operating conditions**: By maintaining communication with natural area managers, you are more likely to receive early advice of upcoming issues and initiatives within the park.

Both natural and cultural heritage agencies usually have a multi-tiered management structure with representatives at local (individual sites or national parks), regional or State/Territory levels. The regional and State/Territory managers are usually responsible for licensing, planning advice and policy, with local officers responsible for on-ground implementation and monitoring. The following points will help you to work effectively with heritage managers.

LANDSCOPE EXPEDITIONS

SEEK ADVICE AND NECESSARY PERMISSIONS

Find out from the relevant department or organisation the contact details of staff in charge of the heritage place you wish to visit. Negotiate the details of your operation and what requirements they have — including sharing heritage data and information. Arrange approval for the logistics of your proposed visit.

You may also require permission from private property owners or Indigenous communities to visit places or pass through their property. The local shire council may be able to assist with contact details.

UNDERSTAND CONSERVATION POLICIES AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR VISITOR USE

The aim of heritage conservation is to retain the significance of the place. The basic elements of heritage conservation common to both natural and cultural heritage are set out below:

One of the basic tools for heritage managers is a management plan, or in historic heritage, a conservation plan, which is essentially a documentation of these steps. A management plan sets out the policies for managing a place. Managers are bound, sometimes under law, by these plans, and tourism will be required to work within them.

Heritage managers may have considerable room to move within these documents. What is important is that tourism interests and heritage managers sit down and discuss what arrangements can be made to best satisfy everyone's needs.

Where there is no existing management plan, discussions should be held with heritage managers and land owners to ensure that all necessary precautions are taken before people are brought to the place. A management plan may need to be developed before a new or altered use for a place is authorised.

The publication *Protecting Local Heritage Places, A guide for communities*, also contains useful information on developing plans to protect natural and cultural heritage.

The on-line reference, *Protecting Heritage Places Website* (www.heritage.gov.au/protecting) can guide you through the key steps in developing a management plan.

Good rapport is the foundation of effective working partnerships. The following points may help tourism operators to build good relations with site managers:

- find out what is special about places — even if they look ordinary to you;
- find out what management or conservation plans are available for the places in which you may be interested. Read them before having detailed discussions with site managers;
- don't take any visitors to a place before informing yourself about it and receiving approval to visit;
- step lightly and interfere as little as possible with the place; and
- participate in the stewardship of places by keeping an eye out for any deterioration in their condition, inappropriate behaviour or anything apparently unusual.

Regional partnerships

Experience has shown that there are strong business benefits from working with others active in tourism at the regional level. In some States/Territories, there is already a framework of Regional Tourism Development Plans which coordinate activity within regions. These plans aim to promote economic development and to improve the professionalism, marketing, infrastructure, product development and ultimately the competitiveness of particular regions. Increasingly, natural and cultural heritage are being specifically included in these plans to promote future product development. This can help regional communities use their heritage assets more effectively for tourism.

Typically, regional tourism development plans recognise partnership arrangements with local communities, local government and the tourism industry through regional tourism associations, thus maximising industry effectiveness. It is important to include regional heritage managers in the development of these plans to ensure they are compatible with regional heritage studies and management plans.

Tips for developing partnerships

The following tips will be useful in forming and maintaining any sort of partnership.

- partnerships should be negotiated in a non-coercive environment. Parties should feel free to enter and negotiate, and feel satisfied of the potential benefits before committing;
- focus on what you share in common, or could share, not the differences. Partnerships need a common purpose — develop one;
- recognise different personal goals if necessary. A partnership can help each party meet its own goals;
- be realistic about what you can offer. Recognise your limits, but stretch them;
- if the scale or nature of the partnership warrants it, consider a legal framework;
- keep working to maintain partnerships — they need to be kept healthy. Trust and openness sustain effective partnerships; and
- celebrate your successes together.

AUSTRALIAN TOURIST COMMISSION

Guideline 3

CREATING A QUALITY VISITOR EXPERIENCE

The foundation for developing a quality visitor experience is a thorough understanding of the characteristics of your market or visitors. Who are they? Where do they come from? What are their expectations, needs and motivations? How do they want to be informed? What else is important to them?

Developing a quality visitor experience involves all aspects of a business, operation or the management of a heritage place. Heritage tourism not only involves entertaining presentation methods but also provides visitors with an opportunity to learn more about heritage while contributing to its protection.

The visitor experience begins from the moment they think about travelling and what they are told before they get there. It is in nobody's interest to create unrealistic expectations. Marketing, promotion and other information should fit the experience that people are going to get.

Using education and interpretation for maximum effect

Successful tourism at heritage places will include a focus on quality education and interpretation.

Interpretation, broadly, describes the process of helping people in the discovery and appreciation of their natural and cultural heritage. Effective interpretation requires the combination of information (about why the place is special), education, entertainment and inspiration. It deals in stories, ideas and experiences which explain, guide, reveal, arrange, question, share and provoke. Interpretation uses a wide range of media as is appropriate to the setting and audience needs, and may include guided walks, talks, drama, displays, signs, brochures and electronic media. Face-to-face interpretation is a powerful and effective medium used frequently in tourism.

Properly conducted interpretation will not only enrich the visitor experience but can help achieve other important management objectives, for example minimising human impact on natural resources and facilities and promoting better public perception of the management agencies and their objectives. It is a very important tool.

The Interpretation Australia Association, which was formed in 1992, has a regular newsletter, workshops and an annual conference. Its website is at www.vicnet.net.au/~interpoz

The following pointers for designing more effective interpretation for visitors to heritage places have been adapted from the CRC publication *Principles of Effective Interpretation: What we have learnt from 100 years of presenting heritage to visitors.*

1. PROVIDE VARIETY IN THE INTERPRETIVE EXPERIENCES OFFERED TO VISITORS

A change in pace or style in an interpretative setting or activity can provide a positive effect on an overall experience. Examples of introducing variety include planning stops on a tour to view vegetation, wildlife or taste local food, carefully choosing a location to discuss some significant aspect of the site, providing some task for participants to undertake, or providing a location where people can interact with objects of importance.

2. PROVIDE PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

It is clear that being able to find or make a personal link is a major factor influencing visitor satisfaction with a tour experience. Ways to make personal connections include:

- using humour, analogies and metaphors which build links between the interpretive content and the everyday experience of the visitor;
- giving visitors the opportunity to ask questions;
- telling stories (particularly those which have characters who can be related to);
- giving visitors opportunities to interact, participate and make choices about their interpretive experiences; and
- challenging visitors and giving them information about what they can do in their everyday lives.

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3. PRACTICE PARTICIPATION

Providing opportunities for visitor participation or interaction in an interpretive experience has many benefits. It is a way to personalise the experience.

This may be as simple as a guide encouraging questions and letting these questions direct the tour or talk or as complex as a multimedia experience with which people can interact.

For example, Port Arthur Historic Site in Tasmania introduces the visitor to the interpretation gallery by giving them the chance to play the Lottery of Life and follow the journey of the convicts from the United Kingdom to Tasmania. Each visitor is given a card which permits visitors to follow the life of a convict. This gives them a greater sense of participation and personal involvement, adding another layer of interest and meaning to their experience.

4. ORGANISE ORIENTATION

Orientation is the process of presenting information so as to provide direction and awareness. This issue can be important for theme parks, exhibits and museums which need to provide effective orientation for visitors around and through the site. Some theme parks use coloured precincts and representational symbols to guide visitors in association with site maps and well signed thematic tracks. People participating in organised tours also often like to know where they are going and what they are going to see. Providing quality descriptions or maps can augment the overall quality of a product.

5. CONCENTRATE ON THE CONTENT

The content of any interpretation should be easy to follow. Interpreters should concentrate on the connections between pieces of information when they are planning their activities. Telling a story and using themes are two methods often used in effective interpretation. Themes provide a single focus or core item to which all other information can be linked.

For example, animals in zoos can be housed in areas according to habitat. The habitat becomes the theme and the various individual animal displays can be linked to the place. Historical interpretation is often presented chronologically; the timeline becomes the thread that links various parts of the interpretation. Alternatively, a theme such as 'Developing regional economies through gold mining' can be followed through time and place.

6. ALLOW FOR DIVERSE AUDIENCES

Providing for a range of visitors is a major challenge for interpreters and site managers. What options are there for dealing with different visitor markets? The first step is to develop a very good understanding of the needs of different audiences you need or want to cater for.
Additional market research for market segments can be useful. Variety and options in the interpretive experience provides opportunities for visitors to have experiences suited to their particular needs and interests. It is also possible to provide different layers or levels of information in an interpretive experience.

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Alice Springs Desert Park seeks to change people's attitudes to the desert environment. This has a two-fold effect. It makes their visit to central Australia more enjoyable by providing greater depth to the experience. This in turn encourages longer stays, more repeat visits and more sustainable tourism practices. It also encourages better attitudes to the conservation of the desert environment. The park is a holistic approach to display and interpretation, being 'habitat-based' and 'story-driven'. Interpretation, whether face-to-face or otherwise, is innovative and designed to meet the needs of different ages, interests and learning styles.

Graham Phelps, Park Manager and Curator (Zoology), Alice Springs Desert Park

Planning a tour

For people planning tours, the following pointers for education and interpretation will help improve the visitor experience while protecting heritage assets.

PREPARE TRAVELLERS FOR THE EXPERIENCE

Offer visitors pre-departure material to learn about the places while visiting sensitive environments and experiencing Indigenous cultures. Provide information on the equipment, clothing and personal supplies suitable to the region.

If Indigenous culture is the focus of the product, the integrity and authenticity of the product is paramount for a quality visitor experience. Indigenous participation and approval should help ensure this.

While on tour, provide enough leaders to manage the group according to the sensitivity of the environment being visited. Provide quality interpretation and conduct briefings before each stop including behaviour to avoid, restricted practices and areas, and endangered species to look for. Use the time on the road for discussions. The visitors benefit by gaining an insight into the natural history and cultures of a region and a broader insight into their own potential contribution to local conservation efforts and sustainable use.

Heritage trails, whether driving, walking or riding, are one common way of linking heritage places and presenting local stories. They can provide a diverse, entertaining and enjoyable experience for visitors. Australian and overseas experience has emphasised that to be successful, heritage trails will have:

- *a well-planned theme or link between places;*
- *well-resourced information centres to orient visitors to the trail and provide information;*
- *clear, consistent and simple wayfinding signage;*
- *good on-site interpretation, maps or guides; and*
- *compatible accommodation and transport options.*

Adapted from The Use of Cultural Resources as a catalyst for Regional Tourism Development, Richard Bramley and CRC Tourism

MINIMISE VISITOR IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT WHILE ON TOUR

Visitor impacts on tour can be minimised by offering literature, giving briefings, leading by example and taking corrective action. The visitor benefits by learning how to travel without leaving footprints and gains a greater understanding of tourism's impacts on the environment.

The *Ecotourism Guidelines for Nature Tour Operators* (Ecotourism Association of Australia 1997), provides suggestions on techniques which can help reduce visitor impact:

- brief visitors about all relevant local regulations and guidelines;
- provide environmental guidelines specific to the area being visited;
- brief visitors on proper behaviour — on trails, in campsites, around wildlife and fragile plants — and what to do with rubbish, human waste, fires, detergents, sunscreens and soaps;
- advise visitors on the level of difficulty of each excursion;

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- discourage unrealistic expectations of observing rare wildlife and plants by explaining all aspects of the ecosystem; and
- advise against souveniring objects such as shells, rocks and artefacts.

COMMUNICATE IN AN ENGAGING WAY DURING THE TOUR

Communication is a two-way process, so interpretation should be open to change to reflect each group's collective characteristics and mood, and according to changes in the site.

These changes can be predictable, such as the changing seasons, or unpredictable, such as a recent fire or track re-route.

Different types of guides have different styles of interpretation and inspire very different client responses. A guide who understands the personal characteristics of the tour group can use this to advantage to further enhance the interpretation. The personalities, abilities and styles of guides should fit the particular tour.

The Department of Conservation and Land Management in Western Australia has produced a book called Best Recipes for Interpreting Our Heritage – Activities for Ecotour Guides and Others, *to help guides design, deliver and evaluate quality interpretive activities.*

The different 'recipes' for presenting interpretive activities are designed to provide visitors with memorable and enjoyable experiences of Australian natural and cultural heritage. They cover a range of intended audiences and subject matter, and include materials and ideas to help plan and evaluate activities.

Guideline 4

DEVELOPING INDIGENOUS TOURISM

Realising the potential for Indigenous tourism

Over recent years, there has been a strong growth in interest from international and domestic tourists in Indigenous tourism experiences. The tourism industry offers significant potential for Indigenous employment, economic and social development. However, care always needs to be exercised in striking an appropriate balance between meeting the needs of Indigenous communities and those of the tourism market.

It is becoming clear through experience and research that tourists are after varied Indigenous products and experiences. Some emphasise seeing performances or opportunities to buy art and other items. Some want a strong personal experience and interaction with Indigenous people. Others really just want to 'look', or visit sites in a self-guided fashion in a national park. International and domestic travellers have distinctly different requirements. It is important to think carefully about how your proposal, place or product caters for the various markets you expect to attract.

The *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Industry Strategy* of 1997 sets out clearly the directions and actions required for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to benefit more from tourism. It identified a low level of Indigenous participation in the tourism industry and noted:

> *There is still considerable confusion amongst Indigenous people about the tourism industry. There are seen to be potential benefits, but it is unclear what is the best way to get involved, and how to go about building a successful tourism enterprise. There are also seen to be potential dangers arising from the impact of tourism, and there is a need for strategies to manage these impacts.*

There is a need to encourage the development of existing Indigenous tourism businesses, joint ventures between Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses, as well as realistic new opportunities which can offer consistency and quality in the delivery of unique experiences of Indigenous places and culture.

There are a several useful publications on developing Indigenous tourism, such as *A Talent for Tourism — Stories about Indigenous People in Tourism; Strong Business, Strong Culture, Strong Country — Managing Tourism in Aboriginal Communities; Tourism Our Way — Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Businesses.*

The preparation of a good business plan with a cash flow projection is still an essential ingredient for a successful Indigenous tourism product. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission has prepared a video entitled *Getting into Tourism* as well as a practical kit, *The Business of Indigenous Tourism*, to guide the preparation of business plans relating to Indigenous enterprises. Details of all of these publications are at the end of this guide.

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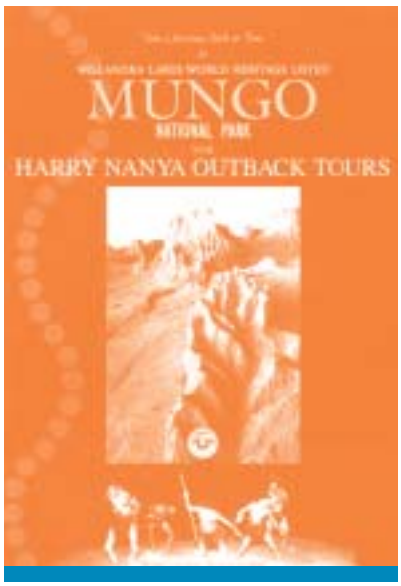
PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPING INDIGENOUS TOURISM PRODUCTS

The operating environment of many Indigenous enterprises, or businesses working with Indigenous people, requires a modification to conventional business practices to recognise available skill levels, social relationships and cultural obligations. In developing tourism in, and with, Indigenous communities, time and effort needs to be spent discussing tourism, what it involves, what the options are, how concerns can be addressed and what is realistic.

Three principles should guide the development and presentation of Indigenous tourism products:

Relationship: Recognise the unique relationship of local groups to the land which derives from the ancestral spirits who created the land and the laws for people to follow.



Responsibility: Acknowledge the cultural obligations of the local Indigenous community for looking after the environmental, cultural and spiritual wellbeing of the land.

Respect: Respect the fact that that cultural knowledge is the responsibility of elders, and that restrictions of access to certain areas or information may be necessary.

Additional principles for the development of Indigenous tourism products (adapted from the *Indigenous Tourism Product Development Principles*), are:

- The living, dynamic, and contemporary nature of Indigenous cultures needs to be acknowledged as well as traditional aspects of culture.
- To achieve a sustainable and harmonious outcome, Indigenous tourism products should always be developed in line with the values, aspirations and concerns of affected communities. Development should occur in a way in which communities feel is appropriate.
- Indigenous participation and approval should help ensure that the integrity and authenticity of the product is maintained from a local community perspective, accurately interpreted and not misrepresented.
- In the case of joint business initiatives, if the need exists, non-Indigenous partners are strongly advised to undertake a suitable cross-cultural awareness training program.

WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS SITE OR AREA MANAGERS

In many regions of Australia — for example Arnhem Land, Cape York Peninsula and Central Australia — Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders are the land or site managers. In all parts of Australia, Indigenous people have cultural obligations through customary law to look after their heritage.

Where Indigenous culture is the focus of the tourism experience, Indigenous people should be recognised as the primary sources of information on the significance of their places, and they should be able to control the content, style, and setting for interpretation. When in doubt about any aspect of presenting Indigenous culture, consider the issues outlined below, and seek discussions with the relevant community to work out what is appropriate.

Sensitivity and respect should be shown to Indigenous law, customs, beliefs and culture. In particular:

- copyright and intellectual property rights for Indigenous knowledge — for example, rights to songs, dance, art designs, access to sites; The National Indigenous Arts Advocacy Association Inc. has developed a Label of Authenticity certification trade mark for goods and services to indicate they are of genuine Indigenous origin, either manufacture or design, to help people discriminate between genuine Indigenous product and those that are simply 'Indigenous inspired';

- publication, use and sale of Indigenous designs and images, language, photographs, and general artworks;
- storytelling about, and interpretation of, Indigenous cultures by guides and performers;
- performances and presentations of music, song and dance;
- reproduction and sale of artefacts, crafts, and artworks; and
- photographing or exposing, sacred images, objects, sites, people and practices without prior permission.

Native Title may need to be addressed at some stage in developing tourism enterprises. To help understanding of what Native Title is all about and how it might affect tourism operators, Tourism Council Australia has published a series of Native Title Fact Sheets. It is best to consider Native Title early on by finding out from the National Native Title Tribunal whether there are native title claims or other issues for the land you are dealing with. Where Native Title needs to be addressed, the use of Land Use Agreements and other cooperative arrangements is one option. They can provide a solid commercial basis for future working relationships.

Open and honest consultation and negotiation, leading to the development of high levels of trust and mutual respect, are vital as plans for Indigenous tourism products are developed. There is always a risk of creating false expectations with proposals for tourism. Being realistic is in the interests of all.

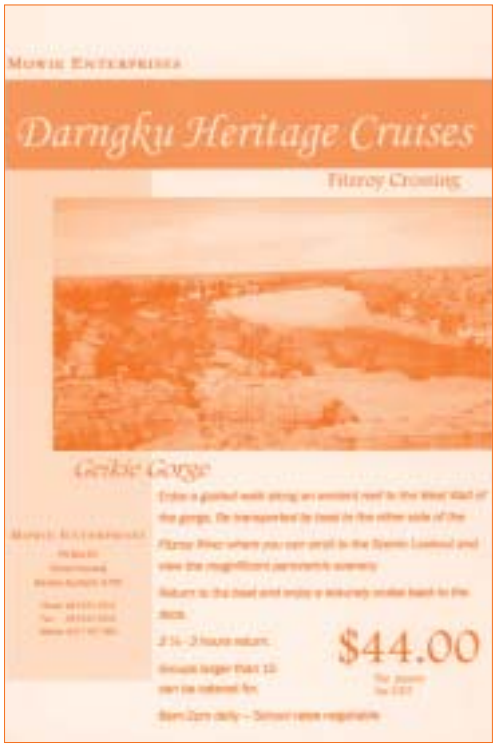
Who better to interpret our environment for tourists than Indigenous people who have developed an understanding and knowledge of their country which can never be duplicated by non-Indigenous tour guides.

Lowitja O'Donoghue CBE AM

Aboriginal Tourism Australia has published a short visitors guide Welcome To Our Land *(available at www.ataust.org.au). It sets out some simple pointers to help tourists to act appropriately, including:*

- *preparing before travelling by familiarising yourself with information about local Indigenous people;*
- *seeking permission to enter lands and communities, getting permits if required;*
- *recognising different styles of communication;*
- *respecting privacy;*
- *appropriate behaviour at Indigenous sites, including guidance on photography;*
- *respecting intellectual property in the sale, publishing or copying of images, artefacts, music, dance, stories; and*
- *supporting authentic labelled souvenirs.*

Competing in the growing tourism market in the Kimberley, an Aboriginal family business, Darngku Heritage Cruises, is slowly winning market share. Based at Fitzroy Crossing, the business concentrates on two separate tours of Geikie Gorge led by Bunaba guides — a three hour guided walk and cruise plus a five hour river cruise with lunch. Both options climb to a scenic lookout for a spectacular view of the gorge and have information supplied by the Bunaba guides on aspects of local Aboriginal culture which relate to plants and animals and the gorge itself. Development of the business has taken hard work to build to the current $70 000 turnover in a six-month season. Darngku Heritage Cruises has acquired a second boat and is training six more people. Establishing a regular supply of clients has been crucial. To this end they have joined forces with three land-based tour companies which supply up to 160 passengers per week in high season. Darngku Heritage Cruises has programs to give back to the community, and they are keen to show other Aboriginal communities how they have set up the operation. Working in partnership with local schools, they have established a work experience program for local Aboriginal youth. Anthony Aiken, a cultural guide with the company says: 'That's what we need to do — become role models. Get them to come with us first. Give them a basic outline of what to do and how to be professional about it.'



Guideline 5

PLANNING FOR A SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

Formalising corporate responsibility for heritage

As stressed earlier, a business plan is essential for any heritage tourism business wishing to be sustainable. The clearest way for any tourism business to recognise its heritage management responsibilities is to incorporate these in the business plan. In this way heritage aspects are built into the business and carried forward strategically through the plan and related management programs.

Inclusion of the responsibility to care for heritage assets in the business plan sends a clear message to site owners, site managers and visitors that your commitment to heritage tourism is responsible, and based upon a well thought out action plan. Success should not be measured by the preparation of a business plan but by the successful implementation of its strategies and achievement of its goals. Visitors are more likely to be satisfied by participating in a tour or visiting an attraction that is actively working to protect Australia's natural and cultural environment. Your tourism operation could support heritage monitoring, research or conservation, either directly or financially.

A heritage tourism business plan

The key elements of any business plan are:

1 **Overview**
   — describes your product, your market and your company. Includes your mission statement

2 **Analysis**
   — includes market and financial analysis and examination of the businesses' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT)

3 **Objectives**
   — establishes goals and directions, linked to performance targets and measures

4 **Strategies**
   — can include marketing, production and financial strategies

5 **Implementation**
   — Who, What, When, Where, How?

6 **Monitoring**
   — evaluating performance and reviewing the business

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The following notes, based on each of these elements, will help you develop a strong business plan which recognises the importance of heritage:

OVERVIEW

Recognise up front, and clearly, the significance of the heritage place/s used by your operation, and the importance of looking after them. State in the overview or mission statement, a respect for heritage and include where possible a concept of stewardship as part of your business ethos.

ANALYSIS

Alongside an analysis of your market basis and financial issues, include an analysis of what you know about heritage and the issues that need to be considered. A summary of information available from heritage studies, searches of heritage registers and any relevant conservation or management plans can be included here. The presence of a conservation or management plan will influence how you run your business. The analysis section is also where key issues, such as the need for permits or other authorisations are addressed. It is important to understand what is involved in getting an operation up and running, and plan ahead.

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OBJECTIVES

A goal to ensure the long-term protection of heritage places should be included in your overall business goals, or at least the objective should recognise the conservation and management requirements of the place/s involved. Ways of contributing directly to the conservation of heritage could also be included here.

STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Marketing plan

Appropriate marketing and promotion strategies should be included in your business plan, and should reflect the mission statement you have for your business and the heritage place it involves. If well-designed, your marketing and promotion strategies can help you influence, predict and manage the in-flow of visitors. This can make your business planning more straightforward and help ease potential pressures on the heritage place.

Human resources plan

The need to develop and maintain partnerships and provide any training such partnerships require should be included in the human resources strategies. Similarly, any implications that conservation management planning may have for human resources should be reflected.

Heritage protection plan

The specific strategies that your business intends to use to protect the heritage significance of places can be included in a separate section or as part of other strategies. How does your plan fit with or link to existing management or conservation plans? If a management or conservation plan has not yet been developed for a place, one may need to developed. Ways of contributing directly to the conservation of heritage resources could be included in your strategies. Depending on the type of contribution you choose to make, they could also be included in your marketing, financial plan and/or human resources plan.

MONITORING

No business plan, regardless of how well it is conceived will have any impact unless there is a commitment to action. It is important to set realistic business and environmental management milestones and to review your business against agreed performance measures.

Performance measures should cover financial and operational measures as well as clear criteria to monitor the effectiveness of conservation and site management programs. Annual reviews are also important in closely monitoring the market fit of a product to visitor needs and wants.

There is a wide range of industry accreditation programs and standards which can assist in developing appropriate performance measures for your business.

PUTTING A HERITAGE TOURISM BUSINESS PLAN TO WORK

As you put your business plan to work, remember to:

- be clear about what you are doing and why;
- keep people informed and involved;
- keep the significance of heritage places always in your mind;
- keep checking that you are not adversely affecting the heritage significance of places;
- continually improve through monitoring, training and market research; and
- develop a shared sense of stewardship with other people involved in places.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL HERITAGE TOURISM BUSINESSES

There are many excellent examples of successful heritage tourism attractions, tours and operations in Australia. Some of these are presented in the case studies which follow in Section 6. Experience, and the research undertaken in the development of this guide, have shown the key elements of success to be:

- detailed knowledge of the characteristics of the heritage asset being promoted;
- a clear business mission and statement of values leading to a comprehensive business plan which addresses heritage issues;
- the support and involvement of the local community and key stakeholders, including Indigenous people;
- cooperative working relationships with site managers, tourism associations, and other businesses in the area; skilled staff who are constantly undertaking additional training in heritage management, presentation and interpretation, and business skills;
- a focused and dedicated management team (sometimes backed up by a board of directors with other community and commercial interests);
- a commitment to detail, including product or service strategy, pricing strategy and an understanding of distribution networks, marketing, communications and sales management;
- a range of products or services that are tailored to meet and exceed customer expectations, wants and needs;
- commitment to high quality visitor experiences and using quality interpretation.

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Key industry accreditation, certification and best practice models include:

- *National Ecotourism Accreditation Program (NEAP)*
- *National Tourism Accreditation Program (TCA)*
- *Outdoor Tour Operators Accreditation Program (OTOA)*
- *Green Globe*
- *Tourism with Integrity: Best practice strategies for cultural and heritage organisations in the tourism industry*
- *Caring for Our Culture – National Guidelines for Museums, Galleries and Keeping Places*

See references

Contributing to Heritage Conservation

There are many different ways of contributing directly to the conservation of heritage resources, including providing corporate contributions to conservation initiatives, partnerships, technical assistance, education programs, publicity and direct staff involvement. The following list outlines a range of practical approaches taken by tour operators.

Contribution to conservation	Example
Research programs	**Quicksilver Connections**, Queensland — has a separate division, Reef Biosearch, responsible for interpretation and scientific research. **Discovery Ecotours**, Northern Territory — sponsor and conduct wildlife research. Often this research is incorporated in the tours. **Montague Island Nature Tours**, New South Wales — is involved in and supports research programs on the island. Two of the research programs focus on the impacts visitors have on the local ecosystem. **Wildscapes Safaris**, Cairns — undertakes research into platypus, examining their behaviour in their river environment. **Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales** — prepares conservation plans for each of the properties linked to a Total Assets Management Strategy. The plans guide archaeological investigations and documentation, stabilisation of metal collections, monitoring all built structures, treating paper-based and textile items, securing efficient storage systems etc. **Alice Springs Desert Park**, Northern Territory — The Park plays an important role in desert conservation through its research and captive breeding programs which cover activities as wide ranging as seed biology research to breeding of bilbies for the National Recovery Program.

Contribution to conservation	Example
Donation scheme towards conservation projects	**British Airways Holidays** — has developed a traveller donation scheme of £1 per booking. The money is donated to a variety of conservation projects worldwide. **Green Globe 21** — has established the Green Globe Foundation as a mechanism for directly reinvesting in the management of the environment to assist sustainable travel and tourism.
Monitoring programs	**Dolphin Watch Cruises**, New South Wales — developed a dolphin monitoring program and dolphin population database. **Quicksilver Connections, Queensland** — constantly monitors the reef and water around its pontoon sites and reports the results to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. **Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales** — a project was initiated at Rouse Estate to monitor 'wear and tear' on the collection in public access areas. This involved detailed photographs and reports on the condition of selected objects over several years. Stabilisation of the site and introduction of an unobtrusive but effective museum infrastructure through the property have been priorities.
Revegetation and regeneration of degraded areas	**Adventure Charters**, Kangaroo Island, South Australia — conserves a section of degenerated coastline on Kangaroo Island, including badly eroded areas. The area has been revegetated with endemic species and is now being used to illustrate the importance of land management to special interest groups. **Wildscapes Safaris**, Cairns — regenerated an area of the Barron River. This included the removal of weeds and debris and the planting of native trees to create a rainforest habitat. **Earth Sanctuaries**, South Australia — developed to protect rare and endangered Australian plants and animals. The business has opened these sanctuaries to tourists to gain an income and used that income to expand and develop the sanctuaries.
Minimal impact practices	**Quicksilver Connections**, Queensland — installed rest stations for snorkellers and a permanent pontoon at a reef for anchoring. Clients are educated about protecting the reef; an alternative to snorkelling is the glass-bottomed vessel to allow access to the reef without contact. **Montague Island Nature Tours**, New South Wales — limited visitor numbers during penguin breeding season. Tours use only hardened areas and follow formed tracks. The visitor centre and accommodation use solar power for electricity and composting toilets are being installed. **Naracoorte Bat Interpretation Facility**, South Australia — this project involved the installation of four remote control video cameras using infra-red lighting in the bat cave with real-time images transmitted to a purpose-built visitor centre. The video system allows visitors to view bats with minimal human disturbance. **Desert Tracks Angatja Atal Tourist Camp**, South Australia — the Pitjantjatara people started Desert Tracks, an Aboriginal owned tour company specialising in bush tours in 1988. An eco-camp has recently been established to minimise the environmental impacts of visitors. **Couran Cove Resort**, South Stradbroke Island, Queensland — the resort has adopted water management measures, including the use of appliances to conserve the use of potable water, native landscaping to minimise use of irrigation water, harvesting of rainwater for use of toilet flushing, onsite sewage treatment to tertiary standard including UV disinfection and reuse of sewage effluent for irrigation.

Contribution to conservation	Example
Informed travellers	**British Airways Holidays** — informs clients of relevant environmental issues of the area they are visiting by distributing 'environmental notes'. **Odyssey Safaris**, Northern Territory — sends each client 'trip notes'. These notes contain information on the areas clients will be travelling through, for example, history, geography and culture of the region. **Burra Passports**, South Australia — provides interpretive guide booklets with the purchase of the passport keys to allow entry to heritage buildings and sites. **Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales** — the Trust established an extensive education program as well as special needs and English as second language audience programs. An outreach education package has been developed and is currently being trialed.
High interpretation content	**Quicksilver Connections**, Queensland — maintains a high level of interpretation on all tours by employing qualified marine biologists as tour guides. **Montague Island Nature Tours**, New South Wales — uses National Parks and Wildlife Service uniformed and trained guides to conduct tours. **Port Arthur Historic Site**, Tasmania — has the visitor centre for orientation, offers experience of the convict life, uses uniformed and trained guides to conduct optional tours. **Injinoo Community Council**, Queensland — the community built a boardwalk and series of accompanying interpretative signs designed to share the 'Aboriginal story'. The detailed interpretative material includes explanations of different uses for plants, including culinary and medical uses and identifies a wide range of flora and fauna native to the area. **Alice Springs Desert Park**, Northern Territory — the Park takes a holistic approach to display and interpretation, being 'habitat-based and story-driven'. It displays all elements of the desert ecosystems; plants, animals, people and abiotic elements (e.g. soils, water, climate and landforms).

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Case Studies

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The following case studies illustrate many aspects of understanding heritage significance, forming partnerships and creating a quality visitor experience. Harry Nanya Tours (case study 5), Alice Springs Desert Park (case study 7) and Boondall Wetlands Reserve (case study 9) demonstrate the development of Indigenous tourism. Woolmers Estate (case study 1), Golden Way Heritage Trail (case study 2), The Town of Burra (case study 3) and Harry Nanya Tours (case study 5) demonstrate the planning required for a sustainable business.

THE CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 1

WOOLMERS ESTATE

Location: Longford, Tasmania

Type: Historic rural property and buildings

Key Issues:
- developing a clear awareness of the heritage significance of the property
- developing business and heritage plans
- balancing tourism and heritage conservation needs

Background

Woolmers Estate is one of Australia's most significant 19th century rural properties. It was settled in 1816 by Thomas Archer and has been owned by the Archer family continuously to the present day. The Estate includes many buildings, such as the historic main house and gardens, store, servants' kitchen and quarters, watch-house and stables, chapel, wool shed (circa 1819), cider house, workers' cottages and blacksmith's shop. In May 1994 Thomas Archer VI bequeathed the Woolmers Estate to the Archer Historical Foundation, a public trust. Incorporated in 1991, the Archer Historical Foundation aims to:

> *Collect, collate, preserve and maintain for public purposes deeds, documents, letters, paper writings, records, memorabilia, chattels and property (both real and personal) of the Archer families of Tasmania and elsewhere their antecedents and descendants.*

The Foundation is working to restore Woolmers to its former glory. Visitors can now experience a unique glimpse of a continuous family tradition in Tasmania since 1816.

Activities

Once the foundation was established action was taken to prepare:

- a conservation plan;
- a business and marketing plan; and
- a site management plan

Foundation administrators also appointed a Board of Directors with the necessary balance of skills to provide strategic guidance for the operation of the estate.

Even with the benefit of a strategic business plan and professional conservation plan, site management has constantly been re-examined in light of new marketplace, budget and conservation challenges. Constraints have meant that 'ideal' product development and operational (staffing etc.) activities could not be achieved in the early years of operation. All on-site conservation and visitor activities have had to be prioritised and trade-offs made concerning which projects should receive financial support first. In each case professional conservation and business advice had to be weighed up by the Board and management.

All on-site visitor activities including merchandise, accommodation, tours, events, food and beverage etc. have been tailored to meet a level of 'fit' with targeted guest markets. Preference has been given to visitor activities that can achieve acceptable revenue, a shorter payback period and value add to the heritage values of the estate. In recent years Woolmers Estate has achieved considerable success in catering for non-serviced overnight accommodation in 'the free workers' cottages'.

A range of site management challenges has had to be confronted, including the level of access allowed in the main homestead, the design and placement of car/bus parking areas and the placement of visitor facilities and services including toilets and eating areas. Refurbishment has been carefully designed to achieve a compromise between new uses and protecting the heritage values of the buildings.

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Success factors:

- prioritising all projects in accordance with heritage and business objectives
- accepting the need for 'quick wins' alongside long term strategic planning decisions
- balancing commercial and conservation decisions for mutual benefit

CASE STUDY 2

GOLDEN WAY HERITAGE TRAIL

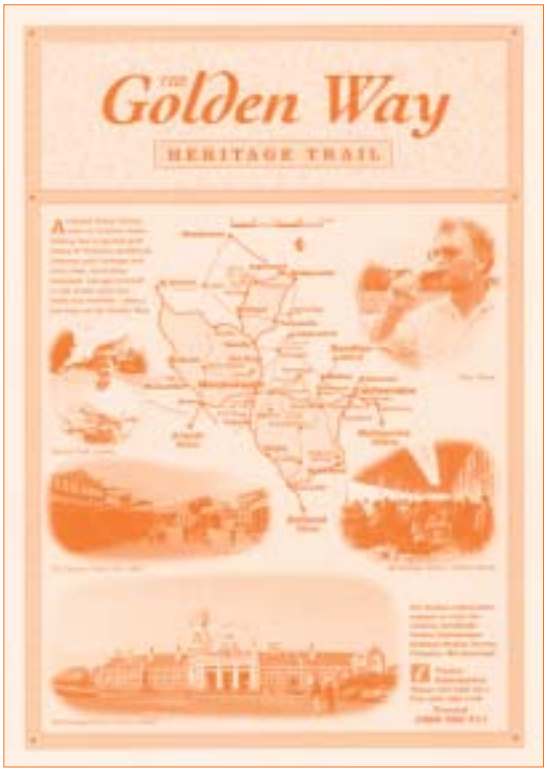
Location: Central western Victoria

Type: A heritage tourism route crossing six shire boundaries

Key Issues:
- regional tourism planning and heritage partnerships
- regional heritage linkages
- regional product development and marketing
- signage and interpretation

Background

The Golden Way strategy proposes to create a new tourism route, a primary linkage and tourism system in the heart of the Goldfields Tourist Region, through and between the historic alluvial goldfields towns. This route is to be purposely marketed as a distinct product from the big gold cities of Bendigo and Ballarat gold tourism systems, but will be linked in the future, by a (secondary) Tourist 'Attractions' Route between Bendigo and/or Ballarat.



Activities

The original project of 1995 was entitled 'The Central Goldfields Interpretive Sign Program' which was significantly expanded to create improved regional tourism linkages and embrace a better defined (and historically more relevant) Goldfields sub-region — The Golden Way–Heritage Trail. This enhanced initiative has been fully supported by a range of funding agencies.

The Golden Way Heritage Trail is a multi-faceted new tourism route and heritage and tourism product. It represents a strategic response and action by the Central Goldfields Shire backed up by a wide range of current authoritative tourism and heritage studies, development plans and business plans at State and regional levels. It creates new regional and cross-regional product linkages, for example spa/gold heritage/wine/natural attractions, and links the many gold towns where long standing identified 'regional gaps' exist.

The approach borrows from the successful international tourism precedents of the 'Romantic Way' and the old Roman Road of Europe tour winding through the villages and wine districts of Germany and Italy and also the 'Spa Towns' of Bath and Cheltenham and 'Cotswold Hills' of England.

AHC COLLECTION

It adapts this boutique niche tourist concept to directly promote (by creating a new tourist route) the region including the towns and villages of the Central Goldfields, namely the Spa District (Daylesford) and wine districts of the Central Goldfields and the Pyrenees.

This Golden Way concept is considered to best fit the identified strengths and marketing segments already identified. The planning scheme responses include the designation of the main tourist venues in the scheme and a detailed spatial townscape strategy for the railway station, industrial heritage tourist precinct and includes proposals for other historic townships and villages of the shires.

These initiatives represent important urban design strategies for the future image, character and promotion of the shires. They are vital to the shires' vision and their liveability and appeal to visitors.

Success factors:

- regional cooperation between local government, heritage and tourism groups
- extensive consumer, tourism product and heritage research
- well planned and delivered marketing
- staged program in accordance with budget availability
- linkages with town planning, landscape and streetscape initiatives

CASE STUDY 3

THE TOWN OF BURRA

Location: Burra, South Australia

Type: Heritage town

Key Issues:
- developing effective commercial management systems
- local government, tourism and community partnerships

Background

The mission of the Burra Burra Branch of the National Trust of South Australia is

> *To preserve and develop historic sites and heritage elements in and around Burra to make this town a premier centre for Australian cultural tourism, education and research.*

In 1997 the National Trust took over the management of the heritage tourism aspects of the township from the local council. Burra is a listed heritage site and heritage tourism in the town now embraces travel, tours and accommodation and their promotion, as well as managing access to historic sites. Forty-three heritage sites were identified, and a professionally produced guide book, *Discovering Historic Burra* produced. This has now become known as the *Burra Passport*. In the package, visitors get an actual key which provides access to a number of heritage sites, which they return at the end of their visit.

This initiative marks new ground for the National Trust, and is potentially a model for its operations elsewhere in Australia. Since taking over management, the National Trust has identified the scope of the business, its resource needs and future potential. The passport system and museum admission fees provide the bulk of business income, and enhancement and close management of these is central to the business.

Activities

In the first 12 months of operation, business realities showed that the existing management arrangement was not appropriate. The National Trust identified a new structure which more closely resembled a board of management with a written charter of responsibilities. This was more appropriate for a sizeable business with significant assets. The new board developed a business plan based on the initial 12 months to project the resource needs and income expectations for the next 12 months and beyond. The plan provides a long term funding structure for the maintenance and preservation of historical sites and heritage items in and around Burra, and emphasises working with other community bodies to strengthen and broaden the economic base of the district.

Among the objectives set by the Board under the plan are to:

- concentrate on the development of an environmentally sensitive tourist industry, which has regard to the cultural and historical character of Burra and district;
- closely manage the business venture, the Burra Visitor Centre and its key business;
- develop and consolidate the Burra Visitor Centre and its key business;
- establish management procedures to enable monitoring of business progress;

- select tourism ventures, which provide worthwhile margins and support the further development of sites and museums, and discard unprofitable business activities;
- work closely with Burra community organisations with shared goals — Burra Tourist Association, Regional Council of Goyder, Mainstreet and business groups;
- identify events, which will provide public focus for Burra and district and work with other organisations to produce these events;
- offer support for tourism operators in the district to achieve standards, which will ensure their recognition by state and national tourism authorities;
- form alliances with recognised authorities in archaeology, history and tourism to identify Burra as a premier site of cultural significance and search out development opportunities; and
- actively encourage alliances with regional tourism agencies and local government to widen the range of offerings and to find opportunities for joint promotions.

AHC COLLECTION

AHC COLLECTION

Success factors:

- a commercially focused business plan backed up by an effective management structure
- the identification of the key heritage elements upon which the Branch concentrates its resources and to plan their development
- establishing strong community and tourism partnerships

CASE STUDY 4

LANDSCOPE EXPEDITIONS

Location: Western Australia

Type: Interpretation expeditions

Key Issues:
- forming a partnership between State Government, a university and private enterprise
- paying clients who assist with scientific research in remote areas in Western Australia
- providing quality feedback following expeditions, including publishing expedition reports
- meeting scientific objectives while providing a rounded tourism experience
- allowing opportunities for participants to share expertise and knowledge.

Background

The University of Western Australia (UWA) and the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) formed Landscope Expeditions in 1992. Landscope Expeditions conducts non-profit, self-supported study and research projects using UWA academics and CALM scientists and experts from other research institutions such as museums and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). Landscope Expeditions answers the need for research to protect the environment, while it responds to the demand for first class interpretation by scientists and specialists. The company provides clients with an opportunity to work alongside scientists and promote wider cooperation in addressing conservation and land management challenges in Western Australia. Landscope offers approximately eight trips a year for up to 13 people — the only prerequisite being that volunteers must be at least 13 years old. Understanding the significance of natural heritage — flora and fauna in its landscape setting — underpins Landscope's programs.

Activities

The vision of Landscope Expeditions is that the expeditions' program continues to establish high standards and is a recognised leader in the nature-based tourism industry. The company's guiding principles are that:

- participants benefit by being part of an experience to visit exciting places while helping to preserve endangered wildlife;
- scientists benefit by receiving both funding and physical assistance as well as increased community understanding of their work;
- the environment benefits from the improved understanding of participants;
- the community benefits from enriched lives of its members and from the benefits which flow on from research findings and outcomes; and
- future generations benefit from the natural and cultural resources volunteers help to identify and preserve.

LANDSCOPE EXPEDITIONS

Most of the sites Landscope visits are on CALM-managed lands, and management plans are already in place. Scientific results and other data from the expeditions provide crucial information that helps CALM to prepare management plans or modify those already in existence. Information on details of the expeditions is communicated to volunteers pre-booking, post-booking, on tour and post-tour. Participant diaries and field observations are a crucial component of Landscope Expeditions. An annual meeting is held with leaders to review outcomes and study the evaluation forms so that modifications and improvements can be made to programs.

Success factors:

- high quality pre-trip support materials and client service
- expert scientific interpretation of visited areas with 'volunteers' involved in research and interpretation
- feedback to clients following expeditions including published expedition reports (for example Landscope Expeditions was able to contribute in a cooperative venture between scientists, community based organisations and Indigenous communities which resulted in the book, *Broome and Beyond: Plants and People of the Dampier Peninsula*.)
- opportunity for members of the community to learn about and experience while helping fund and assist with research into the biodiversity of Western Australia

CASE STUDY 5

HARRY NANYA TOURS

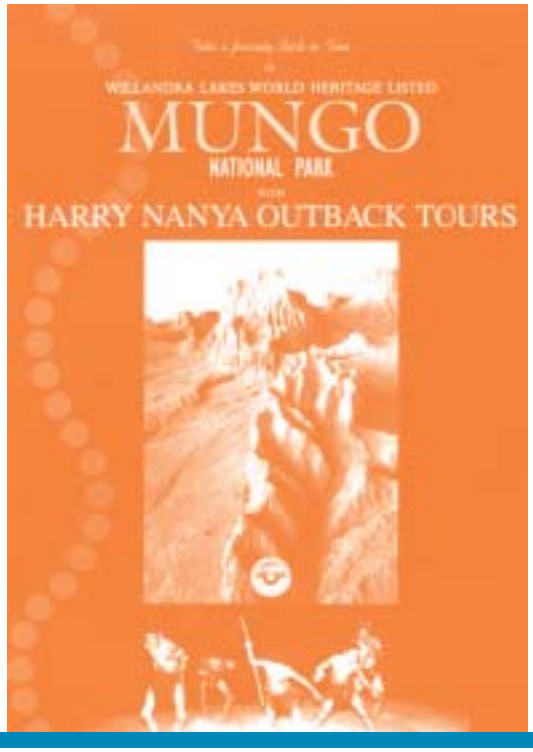
Location: Western New South Wales

Type: Indigenous tourism operator

Key Issues:
- responding to an identified need for heritage tourism products
- developing a diverse range of products
- developing a strong and local Indigenous tourism enterprise

Background

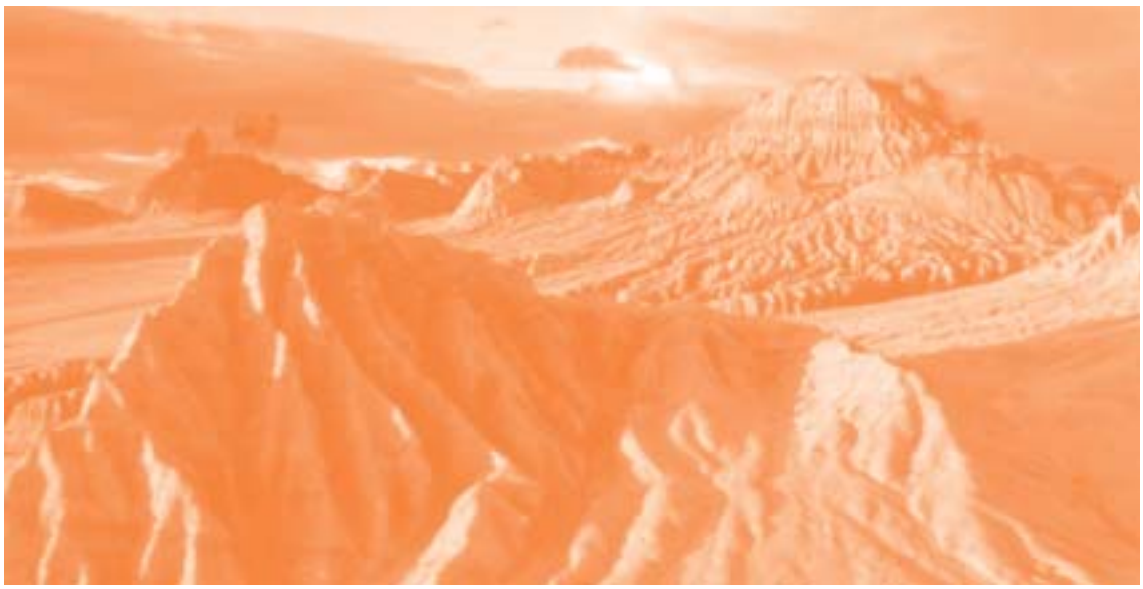
Western NSW has significant Indigenous, natural and historic heritage, including the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area. In 1993-94, a federally-funded study identified considerable potential for ecotourism growth in the region. Following a training program which aimed to encourage Aboriginal people to seek employment in the tourism industry, Harry Nanya Tours was established in 1994 in order to capitalise on regional tourism opportunities. The business is based in Wentworth, at the junction of the Murray and Darling Rivers, and is wholly Aboriginal-owned.



Activities

Harry Nanya Tours owns three airconditioned 22-seater buses and employs 23 Indigenous and three non-Indigenous people, with all tour guides and drivers fully qualified. Ten different options have been tested and developed, covering natural, Indigenous and historic heritage themes including champagne sunset tours; tours to Mungo National Park and Lake Victoria; Wentworth Heritage Tours; Mildura tours; wine and dine tours; canoe treks; multi-day camping tours; six-day Flinders Ranges tours and performances from Barkindji dancers.

Providing an appropriate and personal connection with local Aboriginal people is a key part of the interpretive experience offered. The guides are local Barkindji people. The promotional material emphasises the unique Aboriginal angle of their product: 'who better to tell the story of this ancient landscape than the traditional caretakers of this area. Their knowledge has not come from books but has been passed down from person to person, from generation to generation. Hear the story first hand.' Harry Nanya Tours incorporates Harry Mitchell Art and Craft Gallery and Origi-Didges Australia which manufacture retail goods for sale. The growth in tourist numbers has increased the sales, profits and demand for these goods. These combined businesses employ 64 people directly and 110 indirectly.



DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE

Harry Nanya Tours has grown from an annual turnover of 15.2 passengers per month in 1996-97 to 98.3 per month in 1998-99 and to 1200 per month in 1999-2000. It has an active marketing strategy, providing domestic and international journalists with familiarisations. Over $30 000 has been invested in marketing to put together a good professional look. This has included development of the brochure, making available video footage and running commercials. In 2000, Harry Nanya Tours won the Tourism Council Australia's New South Wales Award of Distinction for Excellence in Tourism. It also won a National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee Award for Building Pride in the Community.

Participation in regular trade shows has been important to the development of the business , in particular for access to an international market through representation at the annual Australian Tourism Exchange. As a result, the business has a large proportion of international visitors (90%), with particularly strong interest from Germany and more recently from Italy. Attending professional tourism conferences and gaining accreditation under the Inbound Tourism Organisation of Australia has been expensive, but worth it. A strong and consistent marketing effort has been the key, as Business Manager Kerry Ziernecki says: 'people don't know where you are or what you have unless you tell them'.

Success factors:

- developing a range of products which make the most of significant heritage features in a region and natural assets of local people
- working hard over an extended period to increase market share through marketing and consistent product delivery

CASE STUDY 6

GULF SAVANNAH GUIDES NETWORK

Location: Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia

Type: Regional guide and operator network

Key Issues:
- network of nature and culture based tour enterprises
- attention to professional development and training
- high quality interpretation
- community partnerships

Background

Savannah Guides is a network of professional tour guides and operators with a collective in-depth knowledge of the natural and cultural assets of the tropical Savannahs of northern Australia. Savannah Guides Ltd was established as a non-profit company in 1988 by the Gulf Local Authorities Development Association (GLADA). Its original purpose was to:

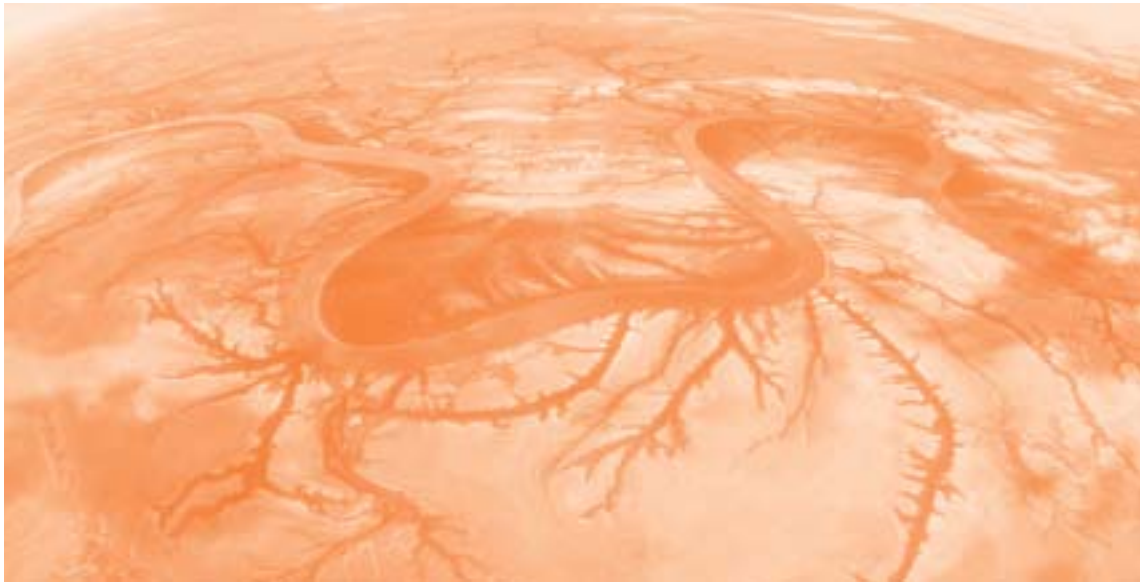
- act as professional interpreters of a remote environment;
- act as protectors of the natural and cultural environment of the Gulf region;
- manage visitor impacts on private, leased or public property by negotiation whilst maintaining the conservation values of the region;
- harness tourism for the benefit of remote communities, including Aboriginal communities.

Members were initially drawn from local communities within the Gulf Savannah but the network has since expanded to encompass the tropical savannahs across northern Australia.

Activities

The Savannah Guides network provides a high quality interpretation of significant sites by people who live in the area. Through the network, tourism has been promoted as a major alternative employment option to traditional grazing, fishing and mining. As a result of the level of local involvement and seeing the system working, support for the local tourism industry has increased. Savannah Guides has gained access to attractions that are on private property and were not previously open to the public. Mobile Savannah Guides operators conduct interpretive tours within and through the region and particular sites have been developed by private enterprises at natural and cultural features.

All Savannah Guides enterprises must incorporate natural or cultural interpretive tours as a prominent part of their business and demonstrate a commitment to conservation values. Members must meet strict standards of operation and abide by professional codes of conduct. Knowledge and professionalism is fundamental to Savannah Guides' operating philosophy, and training, which focuses solely on peer group assessment, has become part of the Savannah Guides ethos. There are four levels of guiding accreditation: Savannah Guide; Site Interpreter; Roving Interpreter and Trainee Guide.



GULF SAVANNAH GUIDES

Two training schools are conducted each year, at varying locations across the savannahs, and feature experts in related fields including ecology, land management and tourism. The Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for the Sustainable Development of Tropical Savannahs is a frequent contributor and Savannah Guides in turn, deliver subjects in TAFE Queensland's Heritage and Interpretive Tourism Certificate course.

The attention to networking and the professional development of members has resulted in higher quality tourism products available across Australia's north. These products are cooperatively marketed using the network's combined financial and human resources.

AHC COLLECTION

Success factors:

- tourism operators providing leadership in managing local resources for the benefit of visitors, local communities and site managers
- knowledge and professionalism fundamental to servicing the needs of the visitor market and demonstrating a commitment to conserving natural and cultural heritage
- knowledge and professionalism developed through mentoring, training and standards
- the tourism industry learning from local people
- partnerships with site managers

CASE STUDY 7

ALICE SPRINGS DESERT PARK

Location: Alice Springs, Northern Territory

Type: Major heritage-based attraction

Key Issues:
- appropriate development with strong partnerships
- holistic approach to display and presentation
- developing a quality visitor experience

Background

Opened in March 1997, the Alice Springs Desert Park is strategically located at the edge of the Alice Springs township and at the entrance to the West MacDonnell National Park. The Desert Park provides the essential entry point and interpretive focus for the Territory's 30 desert parks and reserves. The Park covers 1300 hectares in which intensive development is restricted to 52 hectares

Activities

Understanding and communicating the significance of the landscape and its ecosystems is the fundamental building block of the development. The approach to display and interpretation is 'habitat-based and story-driven'. It displays all elements of the desert ecosystems — plants, animals, people, soils, water, climate and landforms and it presents and interprets the surrounding environment.

From the beginning there has been close cooperation with central Australian Aboriginal people to ensure that the cultural values of the Park are protected and that Aboriginal culture is presented appropriately and accurately. This has required a particular approach to relationship building, negotiation and business development. A commitment born of respect for the people with whom you are consulting, and not to give up on the process when things become difficult or confusing, has been essential.

The traditional owners are proud of their Park and clearly have a commitment to making the relationship between them and the Park work. The Park is seen as a significant resource that is used by Aboriginal people to pass on their culture to their children; particularly as they are able to show their children many animals that have disappeared from their country.

ALICE SPRINGS DESERT PARK

The Park has developed important partnerships and relationship with regional zoos, museums, botanic gardens, universities and other research facilities. These have been essential to the management of the living collections of plants and animals and have enabled the Park to develop its research functions.

Park management consults widely with the local tourism industry and is a member of the Central Australian Tourist Industry Association to ensure that industry needs continue to be met. Advice on the quality of customer service is regularly obtained from other key stakeholders who include the Parks and Wildlife Commission Board, traditional Aboriginal custodians, Conservation Land Corporation, the Northern Territory Department of Education and the local Alice Springs community.

The Desert Park has adopted a wide range of strategies to ensure that high standards are maintained. A visitor satisfaction survey has been developed in conjunction with the Northern Territory Tourist Commission. Random surveys are conducted each quarter which together with comments in the visitors book and to staff provide the opportunity to evaluate visitor satisfaction and the success of promotional activities

Recruitment policies ensure that the Park employs staff of high quality and diverse expertise and the Desert Park also draws on the additional skills of the staff of Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory

Success factors:

- regular development of new guide presentations and seasonal events
- constant monitoring of feedback from visitors, the industry and other stakeholders
- encouraging high levels of individual responsibility in staff
- focusing of the Desert Park training strategy on the development of well trained, satisfied and motivated employees
- working closely with the local Indigenous community

CASE STUDY 8

BARRINGTON TOPS GUESTHOUSE

Location: Newcastle/Hunter River Region, New South Wales

Type: Guest house

Key Issues:
- forming partnerships with local community and national parks and wildlife
- contributions to conservation and management of adjacent National Park

Background

The Barrington Tops Guesthouse has operated continuously since 1930. The property is the primary access point to the adjoining national park and access through the property is kept open to the public. The guest house offers a range of accommodation from standard rooms to 20 four-star self-contained rainforest cabins. All development, including the recently built cabins, has been confined to the 1.5 hectares of the property. The development site has been heavily planted with endemic rainforest plants.

Activities

The guest house acknowledges the good fortune of its proximity to the boundary of a World Heritage wilderness area. It contributes to the conservation and management of the region as a whole by being represented on the National Parks and Wildlife Service Advisory Committee for the Hunter Area. It also acts as an outlet for the distribution of both National Parks and Forestry promotional material, and assists in searches and rescues of bushwalkers in the area (whether or not they are guests) at no cost. The owners of the guesthouse feel that the peace-of-mind and goodwill generated is well worth the effort.

... we are forever trying to encourage better environmental thinking through our interaction with the local community. It is of course quite difficult to alter some attitudes but we feel that every small contribution must help. Perhaps evidence that we may be doing some good comes in the fact that local farmers are now aware of our koala and quoll research programs. They are now ringing up to report occurrences and sightings.

Dungog (the local town) seems proud to be associated with us. It took a long time for old attitudes to be remoulded but we recognise that we will be here forever and must work in with the locals who hopefully realise that there are reciprocal benefits to be derived from our continued existence in their valley.

Brad Lewis, owner Barrington Tops Guesthouse

NSW NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

The guest house is a member of the Native Animal Trust Fund, which provides for the care and rehabilitation of sick, injured and orphaned wildlife, donating money to the fund and providing a release site for rehabilitated animals.

It is also a sponsor of Taronga Zoo's endangered tiger quoll research program. Guests are invited to watch researchers capture, measure and weigh the quolls and an observation database of both the tiger quoll and local koalas is maintained. Guesthouse staff actively encourage the sharing and compilation of knowledge by other specialist groups such as orchid societies, birdwatchers and botanists who come on holidays.

Success factors:

- guest house activities have been tailored to be compatible with the use of the adjacent national park and the State forest
- the operator has taken an active role in contributing to the conservation and management of the area which in turn benefits his operation, the local community and local site managers
- the guesthouse has diversified its client market for nature-based holidays

CASE STUDY 9

BOONDALL WETLANDS RESERVE

Location: Brisbane, Queensland

Type: Wetland reserve

Key Issues:
- protection and management of significant natural and cultural site values
- community participation and ownership
- visitor strategies

Background

In 1990, over 650 hectares of tidal flats, mangroves, salt marshes, melaleuca swamps, open forest and woodlands was officially declared Boondall Wetlands Reserve. The importance of Boondall Wetlands is recognised at a variety of levels for its natural and cultural heritage values, including:

- inclusion of the tidal areas of Boondall in the Moreton Bay Ramsar site declared in 1996, and their recognition in the Moreton Bay Marine Park;
- listing in the Register of the National Estate; and
- as the subject of a Memorandum of Understanding with Yatsu-Higata Wetlands, Narashino, Japan encouraging the exchange of ideas and experience in the management of Ramsar listed sites in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

Aboriginal people used Boondall Wetlands for camping, hunting, celebratory occasions, and cultivation of plants for culinary and medicinal purposes. After thousands of years of occupation, the Aboriginal community's first contact with Europeans occurred in the early 1820s. Within 30 years, most Aboriginals who had once frequented the wetlands were limited in their ability to use the area. In 1867, 3000 acres of land, including Boondall Wetlands, was acquired by the Catholic Church and became St Vincent's Orphanage. Other uses throughout history have included a rifle range, a dump, grazing land, a source of fuel for local bakery ovens, a source of timber for fences, building materials and firewood and a popular fishing spot for locals.

Activities

The community and Brisbane City Council have come together to form the Boondall Wetlands Management Committee and prepare the Boondall Wetlands Reserve Management Plan. Since the plan's finalisation in 1992, bikeways, walking tracks, bird hides, mangrove boardwalks and the Boondall Wetlands Visitor Centre have been installed. It is estimated that over 100 000 people now visit the reserve each year, including tourists from interstate and overseas. The reserve is of particular interest to local and international bird watchers who take great delight in observing the migratory wader birds of the East Asian Australasian Flyway.

ENVIRONMENT AUSTRALIA COLLECTION

The importance of the Indigenous links of the Boondall Wetlands area has been celebrated, through the development of visual art works by Indigenous people, under the 'Blackfellas, Whitefellas and Wetlands' project. Aspects of the project include the Artist in Residence Program, development of an informative website, production of display material for the visitor centre, and inclusion of Indigenous artwork throughout the reserve. The project is a model for the cultural development of environmentally significant sites by providing the opportunity for artists to contribute to the design and interpretive elements of the Boondall Wetlands. The project links the wetlands to surrounding communities, adding a cultural dimension to the interpretive centre and trails, and provides an educational focus that enhances the experience of visitors to the site.

The Boondall Wetlands Reserve has been a rewarding project for the Brisbane City Council and the local community. Major steps have been taken to not only protect the values of the area, but also ensure that these are recognised and celebrated by visitors.

Success factors:

- community ownership
- co-operation and communication between environmental planning, Indigenous and heritage interest groups

CASE STUDY 10

SOUTHERN DOWNS TOURIST ASSOCIATION

Location: Southern Downs, Queensland

Type: Regional Tourism Association

Key Issues:
- heritage tourism assisting the diversification of industries on the Southern Downs
- effective packaging and marketing of local features
- partnerships between tourism, heritage and local government interests

Background

The Southern Downs Tourist Association is responsible for the area that extends from the New South Wales/Queensland border to north of Warwick, east to Killarney and west to Goondiwindi. The Darling Downs area of south west Queensland is well-known for its agricultural industry base. While not affected by the population decline to the extent of other rural shires, the average income remains low, 25% below the national average.

Warwick is a region with a diverse historic heritage, containing some of Queensland's finest original sandstone and timber buildings. These include well-preserved churches, cottages, railway stations and schools. The significance of the area's heritage lies in the excellent state of preservation of a wide range of buildings, from grand sandstone public buildings, to humble shepherds' slab huts. The area also includes natural heritage in five national parks.

Activities

In looking for new regional opportunities, the Southern Downs Tourist Association has turned to heritage as an increasingly important key to promoting tourism in the region.

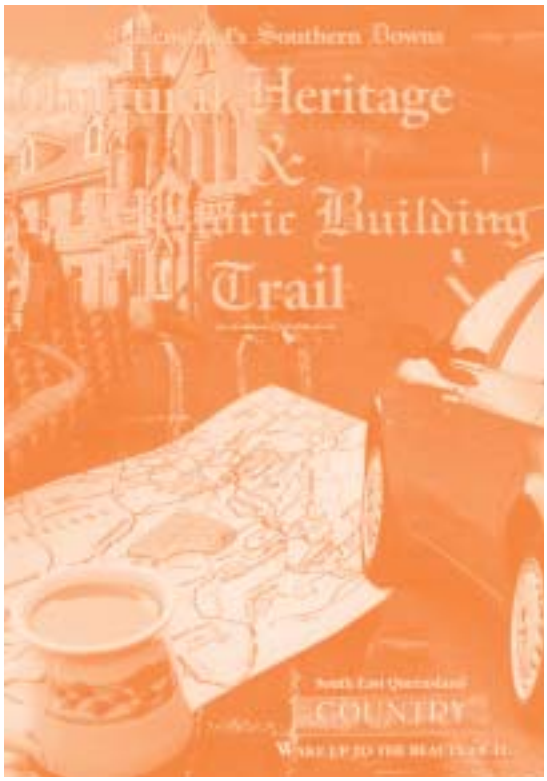
Based around the idea that 'our past is our future', the association embarked on a heritage tourism project to look for new tourism markets and to ensure their local heritage was preserved. In 1999 the Association launched a *Cultural Heritage and Historic Building Trail Touring Guide*, presenting quality information and photographs of the region's heritage places. The guide is based on the appeal of authentic heritage, and was designed to encourage people to stay longer around Warwick and also to visit other attractions and activities across the region, such as local national parks.

Following media coverage and concerted promotion, the guide met with instant success, and increases in visitor numbers. Information requests concerning heritage locations and tours increased by around 30%. An increased number of visitors has had flow-on effects in increased spending on accommodation, food, drink and fuel in regional small businesses. Over 10 000 copies of the publication have been distributed, and in April 2000 it was recognised with the John Herbert State Gold Award for Excellence in Heritage Conservation.

AHC COLLECTION

Denis Kenny, Manager of the Southern Downs Tourist Association, reflects on their experience of heritage tourism: 'this facet has in the past been neglected or more precisely, not taken advantage of'.

Through the identification of heritage places and objects, and working with heritage advisers and the National Trust, the Southern Downs Tourist Association, alongside its tourism development goals, is helping to achieve the conservation of local heritage for future generations.



Success factors:

- the positive aspects of tourism development have helped redirect attention from an emphasis on the downturn in rural conditions resulting from falling commodity prices and poor seasons. There is a sense that the region's economy is diversifying and local people have a tangible role to play in that
- there have been positive social outcomes in increasing cooperation in different sectors of the community. Active partnerships, such as between the local branch of the National Trust and the Southern Downs Tourist Association, have been very useful

The Context

The principles and guidelines in this document relate to a national and international framework for tourism and heritage. They build upon, and are intended to complement and link, existing codes of practice and industry standards in both tourism and heritage.

Sustainability is a concept of direct relevance to the tourism industry. In the international arena, the Rio Earth Summit was a global call-to-arms in support of ecologically sustainable development. At the Summit, the Australian Government signed Agenda 21, a plan for action to achieve ecologically sustainable development. Achieving unprecedented consensus, Agenda 21 provides a blueprint for securing a sustainable future for the planet.

In 1999, a statement on tourism and sustainable development was adopted at the Seventh Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. The wide-ranging statement calls upon the tourism industry to commit itself to the goals of sustainable development by working towards guiding principles and objectives for ecological and cultural values in tourist regions.

In relation to cultural heritage and tourism, the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in 1999 developed the *International Cultural Tourism Charter — Managing tourism at places of heritage significance.*

The tourism industry and other stakeholders should establish programmes to raise public awareness about the impact of tourists on destinations, to promote respect for local communities and their cultures and to protect the environment.

(UN Commission on Sustainable Development, 7th Session, New York April 1999 www.un.org/esa/sustdev/tourism.htm)

The dynamic relationship between cultural heritage and tourism should be managed to achieve a sustainable future for both.

(The ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter, 1999 www.icomos.org/tourism.)

Tourism Council Australia's *Code of Sustainable Practice* provides the national context for sustainability in the tourism industry. Other documents produced by Tourism Council Australia provide additional specific guidance: *Our heritage — It's our business — An action plan for sustainable tourism, Being green is your business and Being green keeps you out of the red.*

The *Australian Natural Heritage Charter* and *The Burra Charter* provide the main national codes of practice for the natural and cultural heritage fields respectively.

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

INTERNATIONAL POLICY AND STRATEGY

Principles and codes

- Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry
- National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development, 1992
- ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter

Industry standards and initiatives

- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- International Hotels Environment Initiative (IHEI)
- PATA Code of Environmentally Responsible Tourism
- Green Globe worldwide certification program for sustainable travel and tourism
- WTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (draft)

AUSTRALIAN POLICY AND STRATEGY

- National Tourism Plan
- State Tourism Plans
- Regional Tourism Strategies
- Australia ICOMOS Cultural Heritage Places Policy
- Our Heritage – It's Our Business – TCA Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism

AUSTRALIAN PRACTICE

Principles and codes

- Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter 1999
- Australian Natural Heritage Charter
- TCA Code of Sustainable Practice
- Our Culture: Our Future (ICIP)

Industry standards and initiatives

- National Tourism Accreditation Framework
- National Environmental Forum Business Plan
- OTOA Accreditation Program
- Australian Guide Qualification Program
- Being Green Is Your Business
- Being Green Keeps You Out Of The Red

NATURE BASED TOURISM

ECOTOURISM

- Best Practice Ecotourism
- National Ecotourism strategy
- State nature based & ecotourism strategies
- National Ecotourism Accreditation Program (NEAP)

CULTURAL TOURISM

- Caring for our Culture, National Guidelines for Museums, Galleries and Keeping Places
- Tourism with Integrity – Best practice for cultural and heritage organisations in the tourism industry

INDIGENOUS TOURISM

- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Tourism Strategy
- Tourism NSW Indigenous Tourism Product Development Principles
- Welcome to our land – A guide for visitors to remote Indigenous Communities

OTHER TOURISM

Strategies for:

- food and wine tourism
- adventure tourism
- sport and recreation tourism
- rural tourism
- backpacker tourism
- seniors tourism
- events tourism
- gay tourism
- business tourism
- cruise shipping
- retail tourism

HERITAGE TOURISM

Glossary

Adventure tourism	Commercially operated activities involving a combination of adventure and excitement pursued in an outdoor environment.
Biodiversity	The variety of life forms: the different plants, animals, and micro-organisms, the genes they contain, and the ecosystems they form.
Business plan	A blueprint for the operation of an enterprise containing a statement of the business mission, objectives, opportunities, strategies and action plans as well as control and evaluation procedures.
Consultation	A process of discussion between those proposing a course of action and those likely to be affected by those actions.
Conservation	All the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its heritage significance.
Conservation plan	A document used in historic heritage conservation which sets out what is significant about a place, and consequently what policies are appropriate to enable the significance to be retained in its future use and development.
Cultural heritage	The ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions and values.
Cultural tourism	Tourism that focuses on the culture of a destination — the lifestyles, heritage, arts, industries and leisure persuits of the local population. It can include attendance at cultural events, visits to museums and heritage places and mixing with local people. Cultural tourism includes Indigenous tourism.
Ecologically sustainable development	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.
Ecosystem	The dynamic interaction between the complex of organisms that make up a community with their non-living environment and each other.
Ecotourism	Ecologically sustainable tourism that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation. Its ecological and social responsibility and educational element distinguish it from other tourism which focuses on experiencing natural areas, such as nature-based and adventure tourism.
Environment	Ecosystems and their parts, including people and the cultural qualities and characteristics of places.
Geodiversity	The range of earth features including geological, geomorphological, palaeontological, soil, hydrological and atmospheric features, systems and earth processes.
Heritage	Our natural, Indigenous and historic inheritance.
Heritage place	A site, area, landscape, building or other structure, together with associated contents and surroundings, that has heritage significance.
Heritage significance	The aesthetic, historic, research, social, spiritual or other special values a place may have for present or future generations. Heritage significance recognises both the natural and cultural importance of places.
Heritage tourism	Activities and services which provide visitors with the opportunity to experience, understand and enjoy the special values of Australia's natural and cultural heritage.

Indigenous tourism	Tourism which provides visitors with an opportunity to appreciate Indigenous cultures and places of significance or which is either Indigenous-owned or part-owned or employs Indigenous people. It can encompass a wide range of products and services including cultural heritage and nature-based tours, visitor/cultural centres, educational programs, production of art and craft, performances, events, accommodation, transport and hospitality.
Interpretation	A means of communicating ideas and feelings which help people understand more about themselves, their environment and other cultures. The process is commonly facilitated by guides, displays, on-site signage, brochures and electronic media.
Management plan	A document which details how to look after a place. It usually contains a description of the place and its important features, a summary of its significance, and documentation of issues, objectives and strategies. It should include strategies for conservation of heritage significance.
Market	The set of actual and potential buyers of a product or service.
Marketing	The process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives.
Market share	The sales of a service or product relative to the total sales of that service or product in a given market.
Natural heritage	Consists of ecosystems, biodiversity and geodiversity considered significant for their existence value for present or future generations in terms of their scientific, social, aesthetic and life support value.
Nature-based tourism	A broad term that includes a range of tourism activities and experiences which occur in natural areas, or are based around experiencing and learning about aspects of natural heritage. It can include ecotourism and adventure tourism, and aspects of cultural tourism and Indigenous tourism.
Product	In tourism, a service, good, idea, place or person with a set of attributes capable of satisfying the needs of buyers. Key attributes are reputation, price, service guarantee and features of the product or service itself.
Product positioning	The image of a product in the market relative to that of a competitor's product and other products offered by the same business.
Promotion	The means by which a business communicates with its target market/s in order to inform and persuade them, usually as part of a marketing strategy.
Sustainable	Able to be carried out without damaging the long-term health and integrity of natural and cultural environments, while providing for present and future economic and social wellbeing.
Sustainable tourism	Tourism which can be sustained over the long term because it results in a net benefit for the social, economic, natural and cultural environments of the area in which it takes place.
Tourism	The activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their normal place of residence for pleasure, business, holiday, recreation and to visit friends and relatives. It is also the business of providing goods and services to facilitate such activities.

These definitions have been derived from *The Australian Natural Heritage Charter*, *The Burra Charter*, the *Dictionary of travel, tourism and hospitality terms*, the Australian Heritage Commission website, Ecotourism Australia Association, Interpretation Australia Association and the Department of Industry, Science and Resources.

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Successful tourism at heritage places involves a commitment to quality and responsibility in all areas of activity.

Quality should be reflected in high standards of communication, planning, facilities and service delivery, and responsibilty in embracing an ethos of sustainability and careful consideration of what is appropriate in product or place development and promotion.

PILBARA TOURISM