
Indigenous Tourism Research Agenda

Key Directions for the Future 2005 - 2008



Photograph: Dillon Andrews (Bungoolee Tours) at Tunnel Creek, Kimberley Region, WA.

Joc Schmiechen

Northern Territory Tourism Commission
Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre
Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre
Tropical Savannas Cooperative Research Centre
Charles Darwin University

January 2006



**SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM**



CRC



**DESERT KNOWLEDGE
CRC**



For further information please contact:

Joc Schmiechen, Research Fellow, Indigenous Tourism

Mobile Phone: 0409 200450 Email: schmiech@ozemail.com.au

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INTRODUCTION

Indigenous tourism throughout Australia has fluctuated markedly over the past ten years. The Northern Territory was the first to recognise Indigenous culture as a growing area of tourism interest. It led the way with the appointment of the first full time Aboriginal Tourism Development position in the Tourist Commission in 1984. Through the efforts of Chris Burchett, Indigenous culture as a tourism product was exposed for the first time to the international tourism markets; first at the International Tourism Bourse (ITB) in Berlin (1987-91) at the World Expo in Barcelona (1992), World Congress On Tourism For Peace, Vancouver 1992 and with an Indigenous Tourism Roadshow to the USA in 1993. This laid the foundation for the subsequent growing interest generated in Indigenous tourism.

The 1991, *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody: National Report* identified the tourism, cultural and pastoral industries as potential sources of economic growth and employment for Indigenous people. The Northern Territory again was the first to recognise the possible value of the Indigenous tourism potential and provided some of the first detailed analyses of the situation with a call to whole of Government action in *Aboriginal Tourism in The Northern Territory – A discussion paper* (NTTC & OAD, 1994). The Federal Government in 1994 dedicated \$15million towards draft national Indigenous tourism and cultural strategies, which after canvassing extensive comment were released in 1997. The *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Industry Strategy* (NATSITIS) provided considerable focus on what was an emerging sector within the main tourism industry.

This provided the catalyst for a number of jurisdictions developing their own strategies and initiatives with the Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia and the Kimberley leading the way. Once the difficulties of developing appropriate product, the limited conversion from the market place and the tightening of available funding under a new Federal government became apparent the momentum generated during the NATSITIS process began to wane (Schmiechen, 2000).

The 2000 Olympics provided a resurgence of interest with the then Federal Tourism Minister, Jackie Kelly providing strong personal interest in this area. This was mirrored by the leaders of peak industry bodies at the time such as the Tourism Council of Australia (TCA) and the Australian Tourism Commission (ATC). Focus on Indigenous tourism became a significant feature of international trade shows such as the International Tourism Bourse (ITB) in Berlin and the Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE). Aboriginal culture was being increasingly recognised as one of the important features that differentiates Australia as a unique destination from its world competitors (Schmiechen, 1996), (Schmiechen, 2000), (Morse, 2000).

In 2003 the then Federal Tourism Minister, Joe Hockey commissioned a major review of the existing Federal tourism structures and directions. The result precipitated a significant restructure and a new strategy was detailed in *A Medium Long Term Strategy for Tourism – Tourism White Paper*. (DITR, 2004). This identified Indigenous tourism as a major special interest area and directed the new national tourism marketing body, Tourism Australia (TA) to take responsibility for leadership in this area. A key initiative was establishing Indigenous

Tourism Australia (ITA) to spearhead a new national approach to furthering the development of Indigenous tourism. The Department of Industry Tourism and Resources (DITR) also retained some responsibilities for Indigenous tourism and in 2005 initiated a \$3.83 million mentoring program, *Business Ready Program for Indigenous Tourism* (DITR,2004).

At the 2000 Sydney National Indigenous Tourism Forum the Sustainable Tourism CRC recognised that there was a considerable research gap, lack of investment and lack of cohesion in Indigenous tourism research. It saw a need to better harness the best intellectual resources from both academia and industry and develop a clear strategic framework to address Indigenous tourism research (Moore, 2000). This commenced a long process of consultation and collaboration with key stakeholders leading to the current initiative and this Indigenous tourism research agenda.

Indigenous tourism has been subject to innumerable strategies and changing policies, most raising more hope than real action or outcomes. It remains an extremely fragile and tenuous sector of the tourism industry despite much of the marketing hype indicating otherwise (Schmiechen, 2000). In many ways it is at a critical point as to how many of the fledgling and even established businesses can survive and become viable in an increasingly difficult tourism environment. There is now a greater need than ever for good leadership, clear vision, targeted support and a cohesive effort by all parties concerned to get it right, and most importantly listen and act on the voices of those actually trying to do the business. Research will have an important role in this.

THE ROLE OF RESEARCH

The value and importance of tourism research to provide strategic direction, underpin policy initiatives, guide marketing direction and evaluate products and performance has been well recognised by key government and industry organisations. In the past ten years this has been especially highlighted in the Indigenous tourism sector (NTTC, 1996), (ATSIC & ONT, 1997a), (ITLG, 2003), (TRA, 2004).

Boyle's scoping study on Indigenous tourism research in 2001 and subsequent presentation at the CAUTHE Conference in 2002 highlighted that there was a lack of research underlying the nature of Indigenous tourism in Australia (Boyle, 2002). The State, Commonwealth and Territory tourist agencies have focused primarily on product demand and visitor expectations with the main statistical information coming through the Bureau of Tourism Research's (BTR) International Visitor Survey (IVS), which has proved to be an imperfect tool at best (AGB McNair, 1996), (ATSIC & ONT, 1997a), (DITR, 2000), (ITLG,2003), (TRA, 2004), (Colmar Brunton, 2004).

Most of the academic research has tended to be descriptive, mainly in the form of reports and conference papers, with little in peer reviewed journals (Boyle, 2002) and a small body of work in Masters and PhD dissertations. A common problem with this is that it is often repetitive with a strong emphasis on evaluating visitor expectations and reactions to Indigenous tourism experiences and most critically little of the findings from these works is readily available or applied to the practical demands of doing the business of tourism.

Boyle's study found that, between 1992 to 2001, there were clearly identifiable gaps in providing further research or knowledge bases (Appendix III) in the industry, agency and academic domains that need to be addressed. Above all there is a need for a more cohesive,

cooperative and coordinated approach to meet these needs. This initiative by the STCRC and its partners sets out to try and achieve this through the Indigenous Tourism Research Agenda.

AIMS

This research agenda sets out to provide a framework and direction for Indigenous tourism researchers to focus their efforts on areas of identified need by a wide range of stakeholders with interests in the development and sustainability of Indigenous tourism. This will be implemented over the next two years and then evaluated to determine its future directions and effectiveness.

The Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC) followed up its declaration from the Sydney 2000 Forum to develop a cohesive national approach to Indigenous tourism research. The Tropical Savannas CRC, Desert Knowledge CRC and the Northern Territory Tourist Commission agreed to partner this venture. They bring with them strong existing networks and commitment to furthering the social and economic development for Indigenous people. Further partnerships and funding support will be actively sought to provide a truly national focus.

The combined resources of the key partners will be directed to assisting Indigenous tourism researchers to deliver outcomes that will directly maximise the potential for Indigenous tourism enterprises to become viable and sustainable business ventures. A key part of enacting this agenda is to ensure greater participation and ownership by Indigenous people in the research process and ensure there is ready dissemination of the findings to the 'grass roots' enterprises as well as to all key agencies and stakeholders seeking to support and advance this important sector of the tourism industry.

The agenda builds on an extensive body of past work including a wide reaching consultation program (Appendix I) that identified the key issues. These have been grouped into three main Themes.

BACKGROUND

The Sustainable Tourism CRC in 2001 commissioned Alicia Boyle to undertake an *Australian Indigenous Tourism Research Strategy Scoping Study* as a lead into a national Indigenous tourism initiative (Boyle, 2001 a & b). The principal aim was to build on the national frameworks provided by the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Industry Strategy* (NATSITIS) (ATSIC & ONT, 1997) and the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Industry Strategy* (NATSICIS)(ATSIC & ONT, 1997).

Boyle's study included a literature review to identify gaps in Indigenous tourism research and/or lack of research implementation. This built on previous work, including Zeppel's review of available literature *Aboriginal Tourism in Australia: a Research Bibliography* (Zeppel, 1999).

Boyle's Workshop Discussion Paper from the *Australian Indigenous Tourism Research Scoping Study* was sent to all State and Territory tourism authorities; Offices of Aboriginal Affairs/Development, ATSIC, Aboriginal Tourism Australia, Department of Industry, Science

and Resources, Sustainable Tourism CRC researchers (and others) for distribution throughout their networks and for comment.

Boyle conducted workshops and meetings with representatives from the State and Territory tourism organisations (STO's) and key industry stakeholders. (Appendix I) This provided the basis for the final report, *Australian Indigenous Tourism Research Strategy Scoping Study* (Boyle, 2001 a & b).

Because of expressed interest by researchers seeking to work in Indigenous tourism, Jeremy Buultjens from Southern Cross University initiated a meeting of Indigenous tourism researchers in Brisbane in 2004. A number of research priorities were identified (Buultjens, 2004). At a subsequent meeting in Darwin, the Sustainable Tourism CRC with its key partners, Tropical Savannas CRC, Desert Knowledge CRC and the Northern Territory Tourism Commission agreed to fund the position of Senior Research Fellow - Indigenous Tourism for three years to help to facilitate a national approach to Indigenous tourism research. This position is hosted by Charles Darwin University.

A key initial task for the Senior Research Fellow was identified as the development of an *Indigenous Tourism Research Agenda* to focus the research effort in Indigenous tourism and to deliver more practical business outcomes to Indigenous tourism enterprises.

SETTING THE CONTEXT

In January 2005, Joc Schmiechen commenced in the role of Senior Research Fellow - Indigenous Tourism to facilitate the *National Indigenous Tourism Research Project*. Following a major stakeholders meeting in February 2005 Schmiechen prepared a paper outlining the current main issues relating to Indigenous tourism research.

Most of the research issues had been identified in Boyle's scoping study and at the Brisbane researchers meeting. Schmiechen updated this work in the subsequent Indigenous Tourism Research Issues Paper (Schmiechen, 2005). This added insights from his extensive experience in developing Aboriginal tourism for the NTTC from 1993 – 2000 and later work in private industry presenting a range of Aboriginal enterprises to the international tourist market.

The *Indigenous Tourism Research Issues Paper* was widely circulated to all the agencies and industry stakeholders who had participated in the original scoping study. Current researchers were also canvassed and asked for feedback. Most importantly an extensive consultation process was undertaken to engage with many current Indigenous tourism operators Australia wide, make them aware of this initiative and seek their input as to what they saw as the most pressing issues.

A wide range of Indigenous operators including community enterprises, family businesses and sole operators were consulted, which helped establish sound links for future feedback and involvement. Despite limited time, over 60 operators were consulted, both on a one-to-one basis and at a number of key industry forums (Appendix I). This addressed a major gap in the previous workshops and consultations during Boyle's scoping study.

RESEARCH PRIORITIES

The following research priorities are based on the consultation (Appendix I) and subsequent feedback. They set out guidelines and direction for researchers seeking to engage with Indigenous tourism and draw on the support and resources of the primary stakeholders.

They are not meant to be prescriptive but rather set out a framework for a more cohesive and targeted approach to research that will assist Indigenous tourism businesses to deliver better on-ground outcomes. In consultation with other major interest groups and organisations, it is hoped to make this the core of a national *Indigenous Tourism Research Agenda*.

In the consultation all 10 issues initially identified in the Issues Paper were deemed important and worthy of ongoing research. They are clustered into three broad themes covering the major issues of concern, with some suggested areas for investigation.

There are obviously linkages between each of the themes, indicative that Indigenous tourism is highly dynamic with many complex parts that need to be considered concurrently rather than examined in isolation. This approach is reflected at the end of the three theme areas as a priority project to evaluate the present state of Indigenous tourism through a series of selected strategic case studies.

These themes are by no means exhaustive and the proposed research should fall within the broad theme parameters. It will be appraised on its specific merit to deliver practical business outcomes to Indigenous tourism ventures.

THEME I - LAND OWNERSHIP AND FINANCE

Access to and control of the land are fundamental issues affecting many Aboriginal businesses and invariably they are directly linked to obtaining the capital resource to fund and sustain tourism ventures.

Land ownership

Both the most recent consultation and ongoing comment from Indigenous tourism operators from the development of the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Industry Strategy* (NATSITIS) in 1997 stressed land ownership structures as the major issue inhibiting tourism development. The many different types of tenure and their unique nature have generally restricted the levels of collateral available, leading to a lack of access to finance that affects most business ventures. (Boyle, 2001a), (NTTC, 1995), (Burchett, 1993a), (Finlayson, 1993), (Turner, 1993).

Areas of investigation should include:

- Understanding how the nature of current Indigenous land tenure and ownership systems are acting as inhibiting factors for tourism businesses in seeking access to capital for enterprise development and growth. Evaluating alternative financing models;
- How the uncertainty and short-term time frames for joint venturers on Indigenous trust lands hamper potential investment.

Funding - What is the real value of Indigenous tourism?

Most Indigenous tourism businesses have been largely supported by funding through the *Community Development Employment Program* (CDEP), ATSIIC grants and a range of DEET training funds (Boyle, 2001a) and (Bennett, 2005). Only a very small number of Indigenous tourism businesses could survive and continue to trade without this assistance. This places them in an extremely precarious position and takes little account of broader social values that may be the major return for this investment in what otherwise would be business ventures that are not commercially viable.

Areas of investigation should include:

- Examining the role of, and inadequacies, of the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) and how this can be enhanced and better utilised;
- Investigating the expectation by funding agencies that Indigenous tourism businesses can and should be self sustaining and determining what are realistic timeframes needed to achieve this, and
- Understanding and recognising the social benefits (better health, social and cultural outcomes) that society receives from government investment in Indigenous tourism enterprises.

THEME II - BUSINESS STRUCTURES AND SKILLS

Measuring Success - Communities versus family and sole operator enterprises

Tourism potential, aspirations and initiatives are seen as major factors in gaining greater economic independence, especially in rural and remote areas. Government funding support for Indigenous tourism development has been almost exclusively directed towards community enterprises, which have had a very low rate of success (Altman & Finlayson 1993), (Burchett, 1993a), (Pitcher, van Oosterzee & Palmer, 1999), (Bennett, 2005), (Schmiechen anecdotal information 2005).

On the other hand, very little resources or support have been provided to family units or sole operators engaged in tourism. Most have struggled with very limited assistance and virtually no access to government financial support, yet have shown a much higher success rate than the community-based enterprises (Altman & Finlayson 1993), (Northern Territory Tourist Commission, 1995), (Pitcher, van Oosterzee & Palmer, 1999), (Rooke, 1993), (Schmiechen anecdotal information 2005).

Bennett, in her recent work on Indigenous tourism entrepreneurship states that 'between 1988 and 1991 an average expenditure of \$54 million was specifically directed towards community-based enterprises annually', and under ATSIIC, during 1988-89, 76.9% of funds released went to community-based projects (Arthur 1991). This preference persisted despite the numerous problems encountered with communal ownership. These included issues surrounding decision-making, limited accountability, too many potential beneficiaries given the small-scale of most enterprises, and the tendency for community enterprises to be driven by social as well as economic objectives (Bennett, 2005).

The imbalance between the support provided to communities as opposed to sole operators or family enterprises have been voiced at numerous forums and in various strategies (NTTC, 1995), (ATSIC, 1997a), (Rook, 1993), (Pitcher et al, 1999) and this was strongly endorsed in the consultation process with Indigenous operators.

Areas of investigation should include:

- An evaluation of Indigenous community tourism enterprises to identify the reasons for their lack of success with the view of developing better guidelines to ensure the success of future funding efforts;
- Building an understanding of the critical factors which lead to sole operators and/or family tourism enterprises having greater success in establishing successful tourism enterprises; and
- Examining what are the most appropriate business and funding models that identify and support the Indigenous tourism enterprises most likely to succeed.

Ensuring succession, increasing participation and capacity in Indigenous tourism enterprises

Many Indigenous tourism ventures started with the underlying premise that the youth would follow and take up the running of the business. This was seen both as a means of cultural continuity and at times revival as well as forging a better economic base to generate more sustainable and rewarding lifestyles.

In many instances this has not been the case and numerous enterprises have faltered and closed because there was no viable succession. Bill Haney's Land of the Lightning Brothers tour operation and Herman and Mavis Malbunka at Ipolera are classic examples. This has been especially the case where committed elders have not been able to recruit the next generations into taking on leadership roles in the businesses created.

Where Indigenous groups have ownership and involvement in major tourism assets and locations there has been a very poor record of Indigenous involvement and eventual management of the various aspects of those businesses. The Jawoyn enterprise at Nitmiluk (Katherine Gorge), Kooljamon Resort on the Dampier Peninsula and the Gagudju Association's hotel and tour operations in Kakadu National Park are some prime examples (Schmiechen, 2000).

Areas of investigation should include:

- Examining the reasons and key factors that have led to the lack of succession and take up by younger generations in tourism enterprises;
- Evaluating the structural, educational, social and cultural factors that inhibit greater participation by younger people in Indigenous tourism enterprises;
- Examining the role of mentoring, support and training programs to determine the main factors that will help to gain better long term sustainability of Indigenous tourism businesses;

- Examining the availability and relevance of tourism awareness and training programs at primary and secondary school levels, and
- Developing appropriate strategic guidelines to assist Indigenous tourism enterprises to overcome these barriers.

THEME III – UNDERSTANDING THE MARKET

Engaging the domestic market – how to increase participation from local travellers?

Traditionally the main growth and interest area for Indigenous tourism remains the international market although this is relatively small and location specific. This has led to a lack of focus on the domestic market which provides the far greater number of tourists spread over a much broader regional footprint.

Greater gains are to be made from better conversion of the domestic market, which over the years has tended to have little inclination to engage with anything Indigenous (Boyle 2001 a), (Perry, 2000), (Miller, 2000), (Tourism Queensland, 2000). This is often exacerbated by a lack of the Indigenous story in vast tracts of Australia traversed by the main tourism flow lines (Schmiechen, 2004), (DKA, 2005).

There is an opportunity and a need to redress this and seek positive ways to re-engage positively with the domestic market. There has been limited work in some areas but the changing tourism dynamics as well as political climate make this area worth re-evaluating with room for new initiatives.

Areas of investigation should include:

- Determining the key factors that are inhibiting greater engagement of the domestic traveller with Indigenous tourism products,
- Finding out what the consumers want and if this matches product availability,
- Examining the appropriateness of current marketing efforts and penetration,
- Looking at the impact of raising the general awareness and degree of information and interpretation of Indigenous cultural heritage and presence along the major domestic tourism flow routes, and
- Focus on the emerging four wheel drive market and the opportunities this presents to Indigenous enterprises especially in the remote regions.

Accessing the niche markets

There has been a strong push in recent years to ‘mainstream’ Indigenous tourism and encourage it to take up broader tourism opportunities rather than focus on the cultural dimensions (Miller personal comment, conference presentations), (Boyle 2001 a), (ITLG, 2004). Although this is a possible direction for Indigenous tourism, demand remains strongest in the niche market, special interest sector (Burchett, 1993b), (Schmiechen, 1996 & 1997), (Martin, 1997), (Tourism Australia, 2005).

This is indicative that Indigenous tourism opportunities given current market trends and expectations remain strongest in the niche sector. With the right location, good marketing and sound financial backing Indigenous tourism experiences can provide excellent opportunities, especially for the much sought after low volume/high yield market. This is exemplified by the success of Putjimira safari camp on the Tiwi Islands in the early 90's and the current profile and success of the Gunya Tourism joint venture at Titjikala near Alice Springs.

Areas of investigation should include:

- An evaluation of past efforts in the niche market such as the *Not For Profits In Travel* market in the USA with current trends and opportunities to devise a strategic approach to tapping this market and delivering what it seeks.
- Examining the linkages between Indigenous art and performance activities and developing a program to capitalise on their exposure to entice travellers to experience the locations these originate from.
- Examining the opportunities presented by the educational learning markets and devising a means to connect product to these travellers.

Image presentation and definition - are we using the right brand for Indigenous tourism?

The marketing of what is deemed to be an Indigenous product, experience or flavour often distorts and impedes the development of a wider range of Indigenous tourism products by stereotyping a traditional cultural image that is not indicative of what is most readily available to visitors (Schmiechen, 2000). The feeling that the 'real Indigenous experience' is only available in the north of Australia remains a contentious issue and belies the fact that the natural environment is the most predominant tourism attractor. (Boyle, 2001a), (NTTC, 1995)

Indigenous tourism enterprises are more likely to gain better market share and recognition by value adding to the prime attraction of the unique Australian landscape and its exotic wildlife and presenting their special perspective on land, life and art.

Operators in previous forums and during the consultation period consistently expressed their concerns with the way the imagery is used to market Indigenous tourism which mostly presents a clichéd and stylised image that rarely reflects the diversity or the modern approach to how they provide a range of Indigenous touring experiences (NTTC, 1995), (NTTC,1996), (Ahoy, 2000), (Schmiechen, 2000).

Areas of investigation should include:

- Undertaking a critical evaluation and review of the main current marketing images used by Federal, State and Territory tourism agencies and major product providers and devising guidelines for presenting a more balanced and accurate image of what Indigenous tourism is and offers; and
- Assessing the nature, effect and impact of how Indigenous Australia is presented in other mediums – newspapers, journals, magazines, film, video, guide books, and art and performance and how a more realistic image can be presented to the public.

Facts and figures – presenting an accurate appraisal of the nature, extent and demand for Indigenous tourism to differing consumer sectors

The figures and statistics continually presented about the interest in Indigenous tourism need much greater scrutiny and likely downward adjustment. The degree of proclaimed interest has never been reflected in actual uptake in the established Indigenous tourism businesses. The much used 80% interest in Indigenous culture by the international market has never been reflected by the degree of visitation to the best established Indigenous tourism enterprises in Australia (Freeman, 2000), (Pitterle, 2000), (Burchett, 1993a), (Schmiechen 2004), (Boyle 2001a), (Tremblay, 2005).

Areas of investigation should include:

- Undertake an analysis of the current methods of obtaining both qualitative and quantitative data for assessing interest and participation in Indigenous tourism with a view to developing more accurate research questions;
- Assessing the accuracy of these statistics against ground truthing with major Indigenous products;
- Undertaking comparative research on how the characteristics of the Indigenous tourism experience relate to similar situations in other countries such as New Zealand, Canada and the USA; with special emphasis on methods of, and accuracy of, data collection on Indigenous tourism interest and degree of uptake in those locations, and
- Developing more appropriate and accurate data collection methods for future use.

EVALUATING THE CURRENT STATE AND NATURE OF INDIGENOUS TOURISM

A major outcome of the *Australian Indigenous Tourism Research Scoping Study* (Boyle, 2001a & b) was the need to evaluate the present state of Indigenous tourism at a national, state/territory and local level and establish what has worked and what has not worked, the current stage of development, funding and finance issues, marketing strategies, technology use, skill base and capacity that resides within the businesses and effectiveness of training and mentoring programs.

Participants in the Scoping Study Workshop (Appendix I) (Boyle, 2001 b) identified the lack of a clear benchmark picture of the actual state of Indigenous tourism in Australia, especially which areas of enterprise have the best opportunities and viability in the present tourism environment. This has been further reiterated in 2005 at meetings conducted by Tourism Australia with the STO's and key agencies. Little work has been done to evaluate the efforts of the past ten years in a cohesive manner and provide a real base of information to work with for the future development and sustainability of Indigenous tourism.

Equally important is the lack of information and analyses on evaluating the ability of Indigenous tourism businesses to become financially self sustaining, juxtaposed against the need for ongoing support that takes into account the positive social and cultural benefits such enterprises have for their protagonists and the wider community.

Case studies are seen as one approach to address this area. Although these have been done before and they constitute an important research tool, much of their value is lost in their disparate and fragmentary approach. To address these concerns and meet the expectations of the Scoping Study Workshop participants it would be an aim of this agenda to facilitate a series of strategic case studies using the same methodology and addressing the same issues. This would be managed in a coordinated approach to provide a generic understanding of the essential factors that affect the viability and sustainability of Indigenous tourism businesses.

One of the core projects of the *Indigenous Tourism Research Agenda* will be establishing an umbrella project linking a series of carefully targeted case studies across Australia. These will highlight different enterprise areas and approaches, including sole operators, family businesses, community enterprises, partnerships and joint ventures.

- A critical aspect of these studies will be an examination of how major government strategies and policies have been applied and the effect they have had on each business;
- A key outcome would identify what are the primary drivers that will achieve better outcomes, and
- One potential outcome may be to develop a 'diagnostic tool' that identifies what are the primary drivers that will achieve better business outcomes that can be applied nationally to help existing and future Indigenous tourism development.

RESEARCH APPLICATION AND PROTOCOLS

In the course of developing the *Indigenous Tourism Research Agenda*, a number of issues arose which can best be deemed as research specific and relate directly to the methodology, protocols and implications of engaging in Indigenous tourism research that need to be taken into consideration.

ADDING THE 'GRASS ROOTS' INDIGENOUS VOICE

A major gap identified by existing operators was to obtain greater input from the 'grass roots' Indigenous operators to identify needs, add or subtract to what they see would really help and ensure they have a major voice in determining future directions and actions.

As Boyle noted, it is vital that Indigenous people are empowered with the right tools to implement appropriate actions. They need to be encouraged to collect their own data and information on their enterprises, markets and related issues (Boyle, 2001 a & b). Bennett highlighted the value of both participatory research as well as the mentoring aspect researchers can bring to working with Indigenous tourism enterprises and entrepreneurs (Bennett, 2005). It is the aim of this agenda to fully support and encourage this to happen in the research that emanates through this initiative.

Some key areas for consideration include:

RESEARCH IS A 'DIRTY WORD' – PLACING GREATER VALUE ON RESEARCH?

There is mixed feeling as to the relevance, needs and amount of research undertaken on Indigenous tourism. This has been expressed by some of the Indigenous sector who consider this area has been 'over researched'.

On the other hand academics and some of the STO's feel that there are many gaps and too little information is known about different aspects of Indigenous tourism (Boyle, 2002).

There is a need to bring some balance to this dichotomy, driven largely by the reaction and frustration on the Indigenous side with the lack of implementation of a wide raft of strategies and promises rather than an overdose of sound knowledge to develop, guide and sustain Indigenous tourism enterprise. The research effort needs to be more practically focused and coordinated to provide practical business applications and outcomes that generate livelihoods and wealth for Indigenous people through involvement in tourism enterprises. This is an area of special concern and interest to the Desert Knowledge CRC with a strong focus on Indigenous livelihoods.

RESEARCH EXPECTATIONS AND EFFECTS

Research is often burdened with an unrealistic expectation of what it can deliver to alleviate some of the inherent problems restricting Indigenous tourism success.

Researchers working with Indigenous enterprises often have a catalysing effect in stimulating different business and operational practices that fail to be carried on once the researcher leaves. More consideration of these effects and how to gain a more positive, lasting outcome needs to be considered.

The value of researchers (or others from outside) as mentors in empowering and assisting in development of Indigenous tourism enterprise is an area not clearly understood and deserves greater consideration. Bennett's work in this area warrants particular attention as a sound model for what can be done with the correct approach (Bennett, 2005).

Indigenous tourism research especially in the more traditional areas also requires much longer timeframes than some of the current research programs allow. This needs to be well understood when undertaking such research to avoid the pressure of working within unrealistic timeframes to achieve positive outcomes.

PROTOCOLS AND ETHICS

In the University environment increasing emphasis is being placed on ensuring appropriate protocols and sensitivities are applied in areas of Indigenous research. Prolonged processes and procedures can at times impede short-term projects requiring more immediate outcomes to provide practical business directed returns to all involved in such projects. Tourism by its very nature is in the public domain and those engaging in this enterprise have made a clear choice to take this on. There is a need to investigate how best to streamline ethics and protocol processes to take this into account and make the short-term University research projects competitive with commercial practices but at the same time ensuring that processes are ethical and Intellectual Property is handled in an equitable way.

The key partners in this research agenda are committed to ensuring that all research undertaken as part of this agenda is carried out with the highest ethical regard for Indigenous participants, organisations and communities. Every endeavour should be made to engage Indigenous practitioners and researchers in the negotiation, development, conduct, analysis and dissemination of research where possible. A core part of the *Indigenous Tourism Research Agenda* is to ensure that the research is transferred to practice and policy in ways that are accessible to Indigenous people and communities (Appendix IV). Wherever possible community engendered protocols such as those being developed and advocated by Desert Knowledge CRC should be taken into account.

THE NEXT STEPS

FORGING LINKAGES

The Federal Government in *A Medium Long Term Strategy for Tourism – Tourism White Paper* (DITR, 2004) formed a new national tourism marketing body, Tourism Australia (TA). It was given the task of establishing Indigenous Tourism Australia (ITA) to spearhead a new national approach to furthering the development of Indigenous tourism.

Chaired by Aden Ridgeway, this new body is currently engaged in discussion with key stakeholders at government and industry levels to formulate a new direction for Indigenous tourism. Research is identified as a major plank in developing this new initiative commencing with an Australia wide product audit and development of a more accurate national product database. It is essential that the University research sector, through the Indigenous Tourism Research Agenda, is closely aligned with ITA's objectives.

The Sustainable Tourism CRC is also engaged in developing a National Cultural Heritage Tourism Research Strategy and a National Sustainable Tourism Resources Program as well as ongoing support for eco-tourism. All have overlaps with Indigenous tourism and it is important that there is a cross over and coordinated approach linking tourism research in these areas.

Part of the Indigenous Tourism Research Project is the maintenance and expansion of an Indigenous Tourism Research Network started in 2004. It is intended to take this beyond the boundaries of tourism Faculties into other related disciplines such as natural resource management, business, social sciences as well as areas of interest outside the university sector. It is envisaged this network will become an important source of information exchange and a major vehicle in supporting the Indigenous Tourism Research Agenda. Once this Research Agenda has been approved, a range of research projects that align with the key themes will be commissioned.

To achieve a truly national approach it will be imperative to engage with other key organisations and groups that have important roles in furthering Indigenous interests. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, the Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council and the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the Australian National University are a few such examples.

The tourism industry in general as well as key sectors of corporate Australia have ongoing interests in improving the quality and uptake of Indigenous tourism initiatives and the consequent benefits this can have in improving Indigenous livelihoods and wealth creation. Their support will be actively sought to provide resources and assistance to help achieve

practical outcomes for Indigenous tourism enterprises through the Indigenous Tourism Research Agenda.

Last but not least the voice of the Indigenous tourism operators needs to be an integral part in driving the Indigenous Tourism Research Agenda forward and the initial contacts established through the consultation period need to be developed and nurtured with sound feedback and honest two-way exchange to achieve better outcomes for Indigenous tourism in the future. It will be the role of the Research Fellow for Indigenous Tourism to maintain and expand these connections and ensure the operators stay informed and connected through regular visits and interchange.

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APPENDIX I – CONSULTATION PROCESS

Boyle's definitive work in 2001 in the Australian Indigenous Tourism Scoping Study commissioned by the Sustainable Tourism CRC provided a comprehensive foundation underpinning the core priorities in this agenda. The Gap Literature Review made significant additions to Zeppel's earlier work and the Workshops, Discussion Paper and Final Report brought together most of the past history of Indigenous tourism in Australia and engaged with a wide representation of the key stakeholders.

The Indigenous Tourism Researchers meeting in Brisbane in 2004 also reiterated many of the key issues of concern and highlighted the growing interest in Indigenous tourism research (Buultjens, 2004). Judy Bennett's definitive work on Indigenous tourism entrepreneurship also brought together many of the well identified issues and focused on an area that had been much neglected so far (Bennett, 2005).

These provided the basis for an Indigenous Tourism Research Issues Paper (Schmiechen, 2005) which extrapolated the key issues and provided additional information from current understanding and involvement with the Indigenous tourism sector.

The Issues Paper was circulated to representatives from the STO's and key agencies and organisations as well as a network of Indigenous Tourism Researchers initiated by Jeremy Buultjens from Southern Cross University. The Issues Paper was also presented at the following forums in 2005,

- CAUTHE Conference in Alice Springs, February 2005
- Desert Knowledge Conference , Alice Springs, February 2005
- Australian Indigenous Tourism Conference , Perth, June 2005
- Indigenous Tourism Australia – STO's and agencies meeting, Perth, June 2005
- Garma Festival , Nhulunbuy, August 2005

These forums provided a very wide cross section of parties with particular interest in this area. Perth and Nhulunbuy were especially important as they provided a strong focus on Indigenous people, communities and organisations with a specific interest and involvement in tourism.

At the same time an extensive consultation program took place with a range of Indigenous tourism enterprises throughout Australia between January – September 2005. This was often the first awareness Indigenous people engaged in tourism had of what the research institutions were seeking to do for their benefit. The Issues Paper was discussed and explained and the feedback and comments recorded at the time as well as in some cases followed up later. This was a most important part of the project and provided the much needed connection to those doing the business of tourism.

All the comments and responses were then brought together to form the Draft Indigenous Tourism Research Agenda.

This was presented for final comment and agreement to the STO's and Agencies meeting in Sydney in September 2005 facilitated by Tourism Australia. All had been original participants during Boyle's scoping study in 2001.

The following lists detail the main participants in the consultation process.

PARTICIPANTS IN AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS TOURISM SCOPING STUDY, 2001

Workshop Attendees	
Ms Alicia Boyle	CRC for Sustainable Tourism
Mr Greg Brown	Office of Aboriginal Affairs
Mr Dean Carson	CRC for Sustainable Tourism
Professor Terry De Lacy	CRC Sustainable Tourism
Mr Wayne Emery	SA Tourism Commission
Mr John Fitzgerald	NT Tourist Commission
Ms Jane Foley	Tourism Tasmania
Professor Leo Jago	CRC for Sustainable Tourism
Ms Carol McKenzie	Office of Aboriginal Development
Ms Leanne Miller	Aboriginal Tourism Australia
Mr Glen Miller	Tourism Queensland
Mr Stewart Moore	The National Centre for Tourism (CRC for Sustainable Tourism)
Ms Trudi Ridge	Dept. of Industry, Science & Resources, Sport & Tourism Division
Mr Ray Simonsen	Victoria University of Technology
Mr Dillon Sothinathan	ATSIC
Ms Louise Terry	Tourism Victoria
Written Submissions	
Mr Paul Ah Chee	Aboriginal Arts and Culture Centre
Mr Steve Crawford	WA Tourism Commission
Mr Roger Evans	Canberra Tourism and Events Corporation

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS TOURISM RESEARCH AGENDA**Operator Consultation – February to September 2005**

South Australia	
Richard Hunter	Ngaut Ngaut
Terrence Coulthard	Iga Warta
Quentin Agius	Aboriginal Cultural Tours
George Trevorrow	Coorong Wilderness Lodge
Reg Dodd	Arabana Peoples Centre
Andrew West	Kauma Business and Heritage
Western Australia	
Angelique Fransen	WAITOC
Dale Tilbrook	Maali Mia
Mark Ditcham	Paruku IPA
Lee Scott Virtue	Kimberley Specialists
Greg Nannup	Fremantle Aboriginal Heritage Tour
Kathleen Cox	Alalala Burr Adventures
	Kepa Kurl Eco Cross Cultural Discovery Tours
	Kooljamon Cape Leveque
Karen Jacobs	Kwillana Dreaming
Caroline Sibsado	Lombadina Aboriginal Tours
Gary Taylor	Mamabulanjin Aboriginal Tours
	Manbana Aquaculture and Discovery Centre
Vincent Angus	Mudnum Tours
Trevor James	Wadumbah Dance Group
Colin Morgan	Wundargoodie Aboriginal Adventure Safari
	Yanchep National Park
Victoria	
Fay Ball	
Colin Cowel	Kirrit Barreet Aboriginal Art Gallery
	Brambuk Aboriginal Cultural Centre
Eaun Hills	Art Mob
Colin Hughes	Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council
Faye Tatnell	Living History Museum Nicholls Rivulet
Hank Horton	Jahadi Indigenous Experience with Spirit

Queensland	
Hazel Douglas	Native Guide Safaris
Colin Brook	Kuku Yulanji Dreamtime Walks
Willie Gordon	Guurbi Tours
Judy Freeman	Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park
Francis Walker	Walker Family Tours
John Farrington	Quinkan and Regional Cultural Centre
Martin Perkins	Daintree Eco-Lodge and Spa
New South Wales	
	Thankali Aboriginal Corporation
Simon Wutke	Harry Nanya Tours
Northern Territory	
	Garma Festival
Timmy Djawa Burarrwanga	Bawaka Cultural Experiences
Noel Wright/Gayili Marika	Birds, Bees and Trees
Anthony Murphy	Injalak Arts and Crafts
Lenore Dempski	Paperbark Woman
Andy Ralph	Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation
Yuri Mucenieks	Djabulukgu Association
Mandy Muir	Kakadu Tourism
Mike Keighly	Far Out Adventures/Juultmingan
Francois Giner/George Jangawanga	Dreamtime Safaris
Peter Bolgai	Manyallaluk Aboriginal Cultural Tours
Bill Harney	Land of the Lightning Brothers
Brian Rook	Brookes Australia Tours
Laurie Berryman/Sammy Wilson	Annangu Tours
Paul Ah Chee	Aboriginal Arts and Culture Centre
Peter Yates	VAST
National	
Lois Peeler	Aboriginal Tourism Australia

Indigenous Tourism Key Agencies & Stakeholders Meeting**Australian Technology Park, 6th - 7th September 2005**

Attendees	
Ron Morony	Indigenous Business Australia
Trudi Ridge	Indigenous Business Australia
Aden Ridgeway	Indigenous Tourism Australia
Kerry Rooney	Department of Industry Tourism and Resources
Ian Tranter	Department of Industry Tourism and Resources
Oliver Kickett	Department of Industry Tourism and Resources
Karen Jacobson	Department of Industry Tourism and Resources
Steve Crawford	Tourism Western Australia
Angelique Fransen	Tourism Western Australia
David Tarr	Tourism New South Wales
Michelle Serone	Tourism New South Wales
Kathy Gatenby	Tourism Tasmania
David Morgans	Tourism Queensland
Chris White	Tourism Victoria
Karyn Miles	Tourism Victoria
Richard Austin	Northern Territory Tourist Commission
Nicolas Hall	Northern Territory Tourist Commission
Michael Geddes	South Australian Tourism Commission
Carroll Karpny	South Australian Tourism Commission
Joc Schmiechen	Charles Darwin University
Jeremy Buultjens	Southern Cross University
Wendy Hills	Tourism Australia
Kirstie Lowe	Tourism Australia
Chris Smith	Indigenous Business Australia

APPENDIX II – CURRENT INDIGENOUS TOURISM STRATEGIES

Year	Strategy	Agency
1994	National Ecotourism Strategy	Commonwealth Department of Tourism
1995	Aboriginal Tourism Strategy	South Australian Tourism Commission
1995	Cultural Tourism Three Year Development Strategy	Geelong Otway Tourism
1996	Aboriginal Tourism Strategy	Northern Territory Tourist Commission
1996	Kimberley Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Strategy	Kimberley Aboriginal Tourism Association
1996	Queensland Cultural Tourism	The Arts Office and Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation
1996	The Cultural Landscape: A Cultural Action Plan for Western Australia 1996-1998	Western Australian Tourism Commission and Arts Western Australia
1996	Cultural Tourism Opportunities for South Australia	South Australian Tourism Commission
1997	Indigenous Tourism Product Development Principles	Tourism New South Wales
1997	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Industry Strategy	ATSIC and the Office of National Tourism
1997	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Industry Strategy	ATSIC and the Office of National Tourism
1997	Queensland Ecotourism Plan	Queensland Department of Tourism, Small Business and Industry
1997	Nature-based Tourism Strategy for Western Australia	Western Australian Tourism Commission
1997	Aboriginal Economic Development in Western Australia	Department of Commerce and Trade
1998	Aboriginal Tourism Industry Plan	Tourism Victoria
1998	Tourism A Ticket to the 21 st Century	Office of National Tourism
1998	Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Plan 1998/1999 – 2000/2001	Tourism New South Wales
1999	Koori Business Network	Aboriginal Affairs Victoria
1999	Aboriginal Business	NSW State and Regional Development

	Network	
2004	Aboriginal Tourism Discussion Paper (internal & NSW stakeholders)	Tourism NSW
2004	Direction for Aboriginal Tourism in NSW - A Plan For Assisting Development and Marketing of Aboriginal tourism product (not released)	Tourism NSW
2005	Northern Territory Aboriginal Tourism Strategy – Revision	Northern Territory Tourism Commission
2005	Aboriginal Tourism Development Strategy	Western Australian Tourist Commission

APPENDIX III – INDIGENOUS TOURISM RESEARCH GAPS

BOYLE'S SCOPING STUDY 2001

Please refer to Appendix IV – Bibliography for Boyle's Scoping Study 2001 for full citation of authored works.

Area of Research	Authors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous involvement in cultural tourism enterprises 	(Finlayson 1991) (Finlayson & Madden 1994) (Zeppel 1998d) (Zeppel 1999b) (Pitcher 1999) (Pitcher, van Oosterzee et al. 1999)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable development of Indigenous tourism • Small scale Indigenous tourism • Detailed case studies of a range of Indigenous tourism businesses to identify factors contributing to economic success and failure • Indigenous entrepreneurs 	(Burchett 1992) (Finlayson 1992) (Altman & Finlayson 1993c) (Palmer 1999) (Pitcher, van Oosterzee et al. 1999) (Schaper 1999) (Zeppel 1999a) (Muloin, Zeppel et al. 2001)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social, cultural, environmental or economic impacts of tourism on Indigenous communities 	(Kesteven 1987) (Altman 1988b) (Altman 1989) (Ross 1991) (Altman 1992) (Altman 1996) (Boyd & Ward 1996) (Pitcher, van Oosterzee et al. 1999) (Schuler, Aberdeen et al. 1999)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous involvement in National Parks 	<p>(Altman & Allen 1991) (Birckhead, De Lacy et al. 1992) (Mercer 1994) (Press, Lea et al. 1995) (Gillespie 1998) (Hall 2000)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industry perspectives on developing and marketing tourism 	<p>(Fourmile 1993) (ATSIC (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission), Northern Territory Tourist Commission et al. 1993) (Northern Territory Tourist Commission 1995)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representation of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous tourism 	<p>(Wells 1996) (Zeppel 1998b) (Zeppel 1998c) (Waitt 1999) (Wells & Kauffman 1999)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous intellectual property rights 	<p>(Janke 1998) (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies 1999)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor perceptions, needs, expectations and demands – domestic and international • Indigenous peoples' expectations of visitors • Ability to meet the needs and expectations of visitors • Segment the demand for Indigenous tourism 	<p>(Burchett 1992) (Altman & Finlayson 1992) (Altman 1993a) (ATSIC (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission), Northern Territory Tourist Commission et al. 1993) (Langton 1994) (AGB McNair 1996) (Clark & Larrieu 1998) (Pearce 1998) (South Australian Tourism Commission 1998) (Pitcher, van Oosterzee et al. 1999) (Zeppel 1999a) (DISR (Department of Industry Science and Resources), ATSIC (Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander Commission) et al. 2000) (Ryan & Huyton 2000a) (Ryan & Huyton 2000b) (Ryan & Huyton 2001)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous tourism in urban areas • Development of more positive urban Indigenous tourism experiences • Indigenous tourism in southern Australia 	<p>(Finlayson 1991) (Clark & Larrieu 1998) (Zeppel 1999c)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative induction and training programs that ensure service delivery • Review of existing training programs and the establishment of a realistic training needs • Education of community members not directly involved in tourism • Identification and implementation of the most effective training and support mechanisms that minimise obstacles to employment • Development of business and tourism management skills • Linking of funding for business development and training 	<p>(Burchett 1992) (Altman & Finlayson 1992) (ATSIC (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission), Northern Territory Tourist Commission et al. 1993) (Weiler 1997) (DISR (Department of Industry Science and Resources), ATSIC (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission) et al. 2000) (Muloin, Zeppel et al. 2001)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous involvement in mainstream tourism • Creating partnerships with mainstream tourism 	<p>(Zeppel 1999a) (DISR (Department of Industry Science and Resources), ATSIC (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission) et al. 2000) (Zeppel 2001)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of government policies and programs for Indigenous tourism 	<p>(Pitcher, van Oosterzee et al. 1999) (Zeppel 1999a)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authenticity – its identification, role, use and marketability 	<p>(Altman & Finlayson 1992) (ATSIC (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission), Northern Territory Tourist Commission et al. 1993) (Pitcher, van Oosterzee et al. 1999)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database of tour operators 	<p>(Altman 1993a) (Altman 1993b) (ATSIC (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission), Northern Territory Tourist Commission et al. 1993) (Pitcher, van Oosterzee et al. 1999)</p>

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APPENDIX V - RESEARCH PRINCIPLES

All research undertaken as part of this agenda must follow principles of ethical research developed by the Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) in May 2000. These principles in summary are:

1 Consultation, negotiation and mutual understanding

- Consultation, negotiation and free and informed consent are the foundations for research with or about Indigenous people.
- The responsibility for consultation and negotiation is ongoing.
- Consultation and negotiation should achieve mutual understanding about the proposed research

2 Respect, recognition and involvement

- Indigenous knowledge systems and processes must be respected.
- There must be recognition of the diversity and uniqueness of people as well as of individuals.
- The intellectual and cultural property rights of Indigenous people must be respected and preserved
- Indigenous researchers, individuals, and communities should be involved in research as collaborators

3 Benefits, outcomes and agreement

- The use of and access to research results should be agreed
- A researched community should benefit from, and not be disadvantaged by the research project
- The negotiation of outcomes should include results specific to the needs of the researched community.
- Negotiations should result in a formal agreement for the conduct of research projects, based on good faith and free informed consent. (NCVER, 2004)

More detailed guidelines are available from AITSIS website
<http://www.aitzis.gov.au/corp/docs/EthicGuideA4.pdf> .

This should be referred to as apart of submitting a proposal for research.

APPENDIX VI – AGENDA BIBLIOGRAPHY / ADDITIONAL READING

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