

# INDIGENOUS TOURISM

## minimum data set for industry audit

centre for  
REGIONAL TOURISM  
research

### WHY DO THE RESEARCH?

Indigenous cultural tourism involves the need to consult and plan with host communities to avoid exploitation. In the past, Indigenous people have had difficulty accessing appropriate training and education programs to enable them to effectively participate in the industry as managers and employees in a variety of roles.

Initiatives to address these challenges have been proposed (Craik 1991, Hall 1995, Smith 1989, ATSI 1998, Parkin 2001 and others). They include: increasing education and training opportunities (especially in service industry skills); more appropriate use of cultural images in promoting Australian tourism generally; improvement of infrastructure in rural and remote areas; facilitation of partnerships between Indigenous suppliers and: marketers, tour operators, and transport companies; better education of tourists and the mainstream tourism industry on Indigenous cultural practices and beliefs.

In response, organisations such as Aboriginal Tourism Australia, and the Indigenous Tourism Leadership group engage with public sector agencies, training organisations, and the tourism industries to develop and deliver programs which encourage participation while recognising the need to address barriers and manage culture and community.

Despite the growing attention being paid to Indigenous tourism development and management, there is very poor knowledge about the state of the sector in terms of its engagement with tourism. Engagement may be defined by:

- what tourism initiatives are being attempted;
- which enterprises or communities are engaging in those initiatives;
- where they are occurring;
- how enterprises interact with the tourism system (especially organisations);
- the type of support being accessed by those enterprises;
- the survival of those enterprises over time in terms of their tourism activities;
- and how enterprises interact with culture and the natural environment.

### WHAT WAS DONE?

The core of this project was the specification of a minimum dataset (MDS) which **monitors the engagement of Indigenous enterprises in tourism**. This project may be considered as a starting point in addressing the lack of knowledge about Indigenous tourism through proposal of a standard set of data items which may be collected from and about Indigenous tourism enterprises. The report also includes recommendations for collecting and managing data relating to the MDS.

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A minimum data set is an agreement to collect a set of data items for a certain purpose. By definition it is the *minimum* number of data items required, but it does not preclude agencies collecting additional data items for other purposes. By being *minimum* it is considered to have the maximum chance of achieving data consistency and quality and of imposing the least burden on data providers or collection agencies.

A two stage process was employed to help determine the parameters for an MDS to monitor the engagement of Indigenous enterprises in tourism. In the first stage, a review was made of current data collections which may include Indigenous tourism enterprises. In the second stage of the study, the key stakeholders and potential users of data captured against the MDS were identified and interviewed.

### **WHAT WERE THE RESULTS?**

They key data domains for the MDS include:

- Sector of activity;
- Location, size, and basic operational features of enterprise;
- Nature of involvement of Indigenous people;
- Linkages with Indigenous community organisations;
- Linkages with protected area managers;
- Linkages with destination managers;
- Linkages with industry associations;
- Nature of use of cultural resources;
- Access to public sector programs;
- Engagement with training/education programs;
- Engagement with private sector programs.

The research also includes methods for collecting and managing data against the MDS in an ethical and responsible manner.

### **HOW CAN THE RESULTS BE USED?**

The MDS is designed to be implemented over time in a variety of jurisdictions to assess changes in the size and nature of Indigenous tourism businesses and partnerships.

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