

INDIGENOUS TOURISM

evaluation of public sector programs

centre for
REGIONAL TOURISM
research

WHY DO THE RESEARCH?

Interest in Indigenous tourism is being encouraged by a strong consumer demand for natural and cultural attractions and a global upsurge of interest in the values, knowledge and traditions of Indigenous cultures. Tourism is one of the few industries that has been identified as having potential to generate employment and economic development opportunities for Indigenous communities in areas where they live. In order to benefit from tourism, Indigenous people require access to knowledge and financial resources. All State and Territories, and the Australian Federal Government have attempted to implement programs which would enhance this access.

WHAT WAS DONE?

The Centre for Regional Tourism Research conducted a comprehensive review of thirty-two public sector programs at State and Federal level. These programs were all designed in part or in whole to facilitate entry into tourism and the development of sustainable tourism enterprises for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, businesses, and communities. The review assessed the extent to which the programs enabled participating businesses to:

- Develop a clear vision of their tourism product;
- Assess the environment into which the product would be launched/ positioned;
- Assess their own capacity to undertake product development;
- Develop feasibility and management plans;
- Monitor product performance over time; and
- Physically implement a business model.

WHAT WERE THE RESULTS?

The research concluded that:

- There is generally poor coordination of programs across and within jurisdictions;
- The focus of many programs is on promoting Indigenous interest in tourism, rather than on providing resources to realise participation;
- Many programs have no support services outside of capital cities;
- Few programs provide ongoing support beyond the business planning or 'start-up' phase.

HOW CAN THE RESULTS BE USED?

If Indigenous tourism is considered an important component of Australia's product mix, more comprehensive and strategically planned programs are required.

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