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# **Indigenous Tourism in Australia. A Development Tool?**

A Research Report  
presented in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements  
for the degree of

Masters Degree  
in Development Studies  
at Massey University

Leysha Monica Penfold

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**REPORT STATEMENT**

I hereby declare that, to the best of my knowledge, the material presented in this Report is original, except where due reference has been made. I furthermore declare that this Report follows the guidelines established by Massey University for a work of this nature.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank all the people and organisations that helped me during the compilation of this Report. Their assistance was invaluable. They, and their affiliations, are listed in the Methodology section of this Report. Additionally, I would like to sincerely thank Drs Barbara Nowak and John Overton for their encouragement and guidance.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research Report examines tourism and its potential role in the development of Australia's Indigenous peoples, namely Aborigines and Torres Straight Islanders. It begins by examining the current situation of the Indigenous people to establish that there is indeed a need for development. This is followed by a general examination of both tourism and development, and how the two might interact. The current state of Indigenous tourism, particularly cultural tourism, in Australia is then explored, with an emphasis on the role of Government and possible modes of Indigenous involvement. The next sections, which constitute the main thrust of this Report, examine:

- barriers to Indigenous involvement in tourism,
- the negative impacts of tourism involvement
- the role of education and training in circumventing some of these problems

It is hoped that this document can provide a counterpoint to the predominantly positive material which has been produced by the Australian Government and the tourism industry. Finally, this Report seeks to place Indigenous tourism in the wider context of economic and social developments, and changing Government policy.

## SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This Report examines the juxtaposition of tourism and Indigenous Australia. It aims to explore some of the costs and benefits, particularly in a cultural sense, of this interaction. It also seeks to place this interaction in the context of Government policy changes and social developments. A work of this size must necessarily be limited in its scope. These limitations are discussed below.

- Although there are two officially recognised Indigenous peoples in Australia, namely Torres Strait Islanders and Aborigines, they are frequently considered together in research and in Government policies. The same will apply in this Report. Thus the term “Indigenous” is used instead of the phrase “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander”.
- There is no homogenous Indigenous society; rather there is an enormous diversity of circumstances, experiences, languages etc. It is not possible, in a Report of this size, to take account of all these differences.
- Similarly, size limitations means that the focus of this Report has had to be limited to the Australian experience, as opposed to an international overview.
- Socio-cultural impacts have taken precedence over the already well documented economic and environmental impacts.
- As the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Industry Strategy and other Government publications emphasise the positive aspects of entry into the tourism industry, this Report concentrates on the real and potential negative aspects.
- The constraints and impacts of tourism have been studied in isolation without considering alternatives avenues to tourism.

- The Report focuses on the more remote, traditional Indigenous culture, as opposed to urban Indigenous culture.
- Gender issues have not been substantially considered in this Report.
- The examination of educational issues is biased towards research conducted at the primary and secondary school levels, as opposed to the tertiary level or vocational level. This is largely the result of the greater amount of available research for the first two levels.

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## 1. METHODOLOGY

This Report is largely a secondary research report, with information garnered from a variety of sources including books, newspapers, journals, Government publications, tourism industry publications, the Internet etc. Some material was obtained by directly contacting (via phone or letter) relevant ATSI (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander), Government, and tourism bodies. An example of such a contact letter is included in the Appendix.

The following list identifies the people and organisations that provided information for this Report. An asterisk indicates that personal contact was made with the denoted person or organisation..

- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Cultural Studies. Brisbane.
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Social Justice (Federal). Sydney.
- Aboriginal Radio 4AAA. Brisbane.
- Aboriginal Workers Federation. Sydney.
- Altman\*, John. Centre for Aboriginal Policy Research (CAEPER), Australian National University, Canberra.
- Arrilla, Shelley. Aboriginal Training and Development. Brisbane.
- ATSI students\*, Maroochydore High School, Maroochydore.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics\*. Canberra.

- Back To Dream Time Promotions. Sydney.
- Bah Ta Bah Aboriginal Dance Troupe. Menai.
- Banka, Bob. Office of National Tourism.
- Birigubbal Aboriginal Corp. Brisbane.
- Bolin, Bob. Bureau Of Tourism Research.
- Braunstien\*, David. Sydney.
- Briggs\*, Susan. Tourism Training Australia.
- Brisbane Aboriginal Council of Elders. Brisbane.
- CNC Consultants Pty Ltd. Brisbane.
- Department of Industry, Science & Tourism. Canberra.
- Desert Tracks. Yulara.
- Douglas\*, Linda. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Strategy (NATSITS), Canberra.
- Geerbaugh Aboriginal Cultural Centre. Brisbane.
- Hall, Louise. Economic Policy Section, ATSIC.

- Healey, Rob. New South Wales AECG Incorporated.
- Heward\*, Mark. ATSIC, Brisbane.
- Inala Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Community Resource Association Inc. Brisbane.
- Indigenous Information Service Association Inc. Brisbane.
- Johnston, Lisa. ATSIC Queensland State Office.
- Kambu Progress Association. Brisbane.
- Keriba Warngun Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Women. Brisbane.
- Kombumeri Aboriginal Corporation for Culture. Brisbane.
- Koobara Aboriginal & Islander Family Resource Centre. Brisbane.
- La Perouse Community Development. Aboriginal Corporation.
- Martin\*, Andrea. Regional Development Officer, Aboriginal and Special Interest Tourism. Northern Territory Tourism Commission.
- Miller\*, Glen. Coordinator, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism. Queensland Travel and Tourism Corporation (QTTC).
- National Indigenous Arts Advocacy Assoc. Inc. Surrey Hills.
- NSW Aboriginal Education Consulting Group. Stanmore.

- Manyallaluk Cultural Tours. Katherine.
- Milnjerribah Moorgumpin (Elders-In-Council). Brisbane.
- Retford\*, Les. Tourism Training Queensland.
- Singleton, Kylie. Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park, Cairns.
- Sothinathan\*, Dillion. ATSIC, Canberra.
- Tourism Council Australia\*. Queensland.
- Western Sydney Community Aboriginal Corporation. Sydney.

## **2. INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN'S BACKGROUND**

### **2.1. *Introduction***

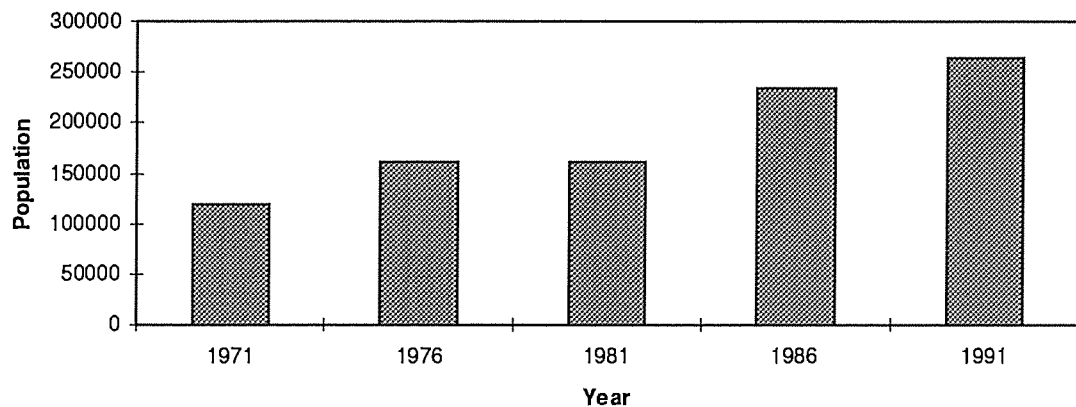
The statistics provided in this chapter help to both delineate the current situation of Indigenous people, and to suggest factors that must be considered in the context of their current and potential involvement in tourism. Indigenous people across Australia live in a diversity of circumstances. While measures of their socio-economic status indicate that they are worse under any measure than the total Australian population, it must be remembered that the circumstances of individuals may vary greatly from the averages described here. Major areas examined include population, health, education, employment and training, income, housing, and land. The statistics given in this chapter (unless indicated otherwise) are derived from a recent compilations of Indigenous data (ATSIC, 1995:3 ; ATSIC Statistical Services Strategic Development Unit, 1994:2), which in turn was derived from a variety of sources such as the Census of Population and Housing conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in August 1991, the Land Tenure Map of 1993, and the ATSIC Housing and Community Infrastructure Needs Survey, 1992.

### **2.2. *Population***

#### **2.2.1. Population growth**

Almost 116 100 people chose to identify as Indigenous people in the 1971 census, the first time this option was available. From the 1991 census, 265 458 people identified themselves as being of Indigenous origin; 238 575 Aboriginal persons, and 26 883 Torres Strait Islander persons (Fig. 1). This was partly due to an increased willingness of people to identify

themselves of Indigenous descent, and partly due to other factors such as improved coverage in the Census and a birthrate higher than the national rate. The Indigenous population is expected to increase to over four hundred thousand by the census of 2011 (Gray & Gaminiratne, 1993:6).



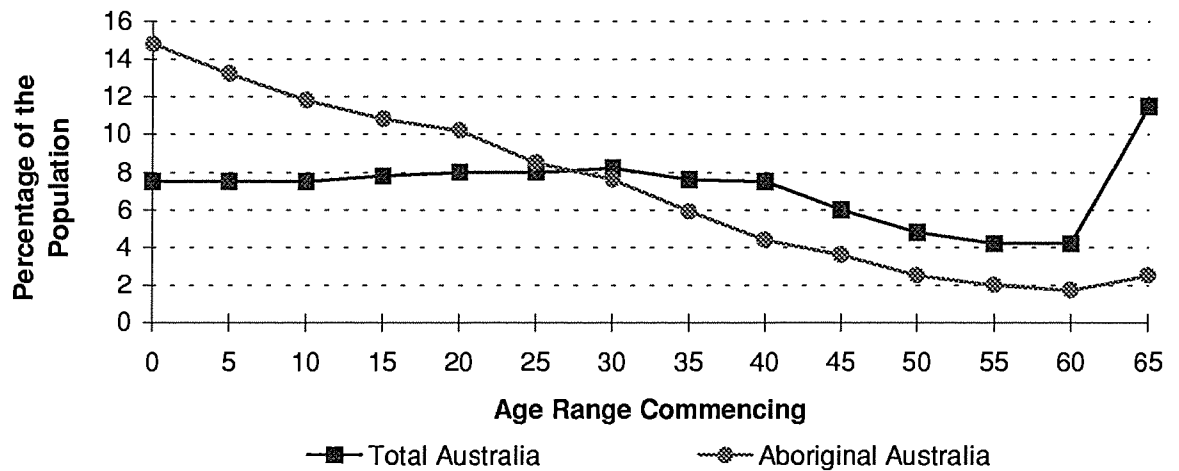
**Fig 1** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population 1971 - 1991

### 2.2.2. Age structure

The chart in Fig. 2 shows the age structure of the Indigenous population compared to the age structure of the total Australian population. The five categories show that, proportionally, there are more infants (0-4 years), children (5-14 years) and youth (15-24 years) in the Indigenous population, and fewer adults (25-64 years) and elderly (65 years and over). The youthfulness of the Indigenous population is further highlighted by the fact that the median age of the Indigenous population was 19 years compared to 32 years for the total Australian population.

This pattern reflects both higher birthrates and higher mortality rates than for the wider population. In the period 1986 to 1991, the total fertility rate for all Australian women was 1.9, but for Indigenous women it was just over 3.2. Mortality rates for Indigenous people, however, are up to 7 times higher for particular age groups.





**Fig 2 Population Profiles : Aboriginal Australia and Total Australia 1991**

*SOURCE: ATSIC Statistical Services Strategic Development Unit, 1994*

### **2.3. Geographic distribution**

In 1991, the Indigenous population had a significantly different pattern of geographic distribution, with only 27% living in major urban areas, compared with 62% of the total population.

### **2.4. Income**

The median income for Indigenous people aged 15 years and over in Australia in 1991 was \$8900. This was \$5100 below the total Australian figure. This low figure may partly be explained by a younger population with lower income but it is substantially due to high levels of unemployment and the concentration of Indigenous people in lower paying occupations.

The median Indigenous family income of \$24 600 was \$10 200 below the total Australian figure. One parent families are much more prevalent in the Indigenous population than in

the non-Indigenous population. This is a major determinant of family income as a large number of single parent families are dependent on the Government for income support.

Government payments were the main source of income for 55% of people, Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) scheme for 9%, and non-CDEP earned income for 24%. One in 9 had no income. Of the estimated 64% of people receiving Government payments: 43% received family payments; 32% received Newstart or Jobsearch, and 16% received a sole parent pension (of whom 92% were female).

## **2.5. Housing**

Inadequate housing and limited or non-existent essential services are recognised as major contributors to the poor health standards suffered by Indigenous people.

According to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey in February 1995 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1995:5), nearly 7 in 10 private A/STI dwellings were being rented. Nearly one in four renters reported that the dwelling did not satisfy the needs of the household, with the proportion approaching 1 in 3 in rural areas. Overcrowding was particularly acute in rural areas, where 1 household in 3 comprised 6 or more usual residents, and three quarters of such households had 3 bedrooms or less. Some 4% of the Indigenous population live in improvised dwellings.

## **2.6. Health**

By both national and international standards, the health status of Indigenous people is poor; all health indicators of the Indigenous population showing that their health is considerably worse than that enjoyed by the total Australian population.

### 2.6.1. Life expectancy

The life expectancy of Indigenous males, at 57 years, is 17 years below the life expectancy of the total Australian male population. For Indigenous females the life expectancy is 65 years, compared to 80 years for the total female population. At any age, Indigenous people are more than twice as likely to die as non-Indigenous people. For Indigenous people aged 25 to 44, the risk is 5 times greater than the national average.

### 2.6.2. Environmental health

Many of the health problems of the Indigenous population can be attributed to environmental health factors including water quality (14 616 people affected by water quality deficiencies), availability problems (34 270 people affected), poor waste disposal systems (230 communities affected), and a lack of electricity (251 communities affected). Furthermore, lack of access to services and information may adversely affect health. Only 28% of Aborigines live in capital cities with easy access to all mainstream health services; 50% live in towns and rural communities, and the remainder in remote areas.

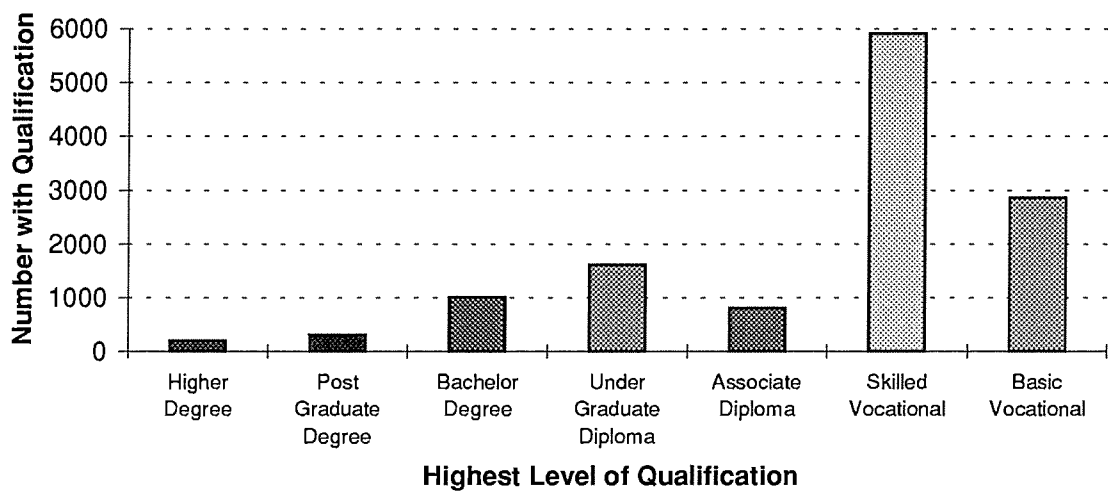
## 2.7. *Law and justice*

Indigenous people continue to be heavily over-represented in statistics for the criminal justice system. In 1992, Indigenous people were in police custody at 26 times the rate for non-Indigenous people. In 1993, 1 in 7 prisoners were Indigenous people. Indigenous people are over represented by a factor of 15 in Australian prisons.

## 2.8. Education

### 2.8.1. Qualifications

Nearly half of Indigenous people aged 15 and over had had no formal education or had not reached year 10 levels (5<sup>th</sup> form). Slightly over thirteen thousand Indigenous people held formal qualifications in 1991. Nearly six thousand people held skilled vocational qualifications and nearly three thousand more held basic vocational qualifications (Fig. 3).



**Fig 3 Level of Qualification 1991**

*SOURCE: ATSIC Statistical Services Strategic Development Unit, 1994*

The proportion of the population with qualifications is dependent on many factors, but is heavily influenced by the availability of local education facilities. The remote zones with fewer tertiary education institutions had lower qualification rates than the metropolitan centres.

### 2.8.2. Secondary education

While Indigenous participation levels are improving, the gap with non-Indigenous rates remains wide. Between 1985 and 1992, the retention rate to year 12 (7<sup>th</sup> form) of Indigenous students rose from 14% to 25%. However, rates for other students rose from 58% to 78%. School participation rates declined significantly after age 14, from 98 % to 31% at age 17.

### 2.8.3. Tertiary education

Indigenous enrolments in TAFE are increasing as a proportion of total TAFE enrolments. The 1991 Census showed that, among 20-24 year olds, the proportion of Indigenous people attending tertiary educational institutions was about one-third of the non-Indigenous rate. For Indigenous students, there has been a significant shift from enrolments in diplomas to enrolments in bachelor degrees. A higher proportion (57%) of persons with post-school qualifications were employed than persons without qualifications (33%). Earnings were also higher, with 29% earning more than \$25 000 a year, compared with 8% of those without post-school qualifications.

### 2.8.4. Exposure to Indigenous studies

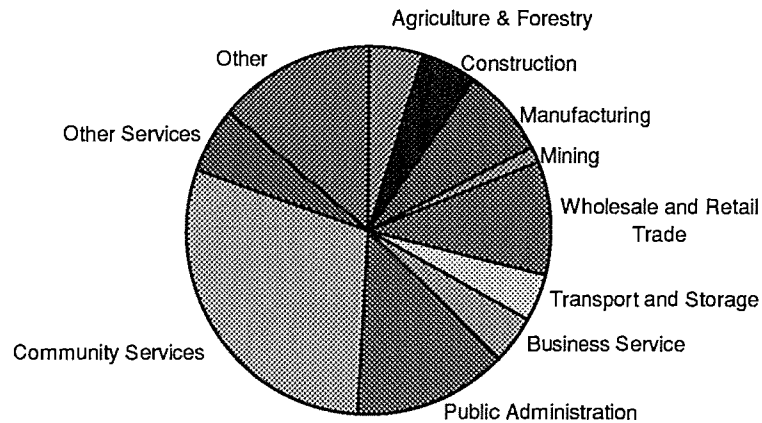
Just over half of all Indigenous students were taught about Indigenous cultures at school. In addition, 18% were taught Indigenous languages. Nearly 2 in 5 were taught by an Indigenous teacher (14%), education worker (22%) or had a community member attend the school regularly to take lessons (12%). Issues relating to education and training are discussed in detail in Section 7.2.

## **2.9. Employment**

Unemployment and employment are vital factors in measuring the social well being of the Indigenous population. The employed rates for Indigenous people in 1991 was 36%. This was considerably lower than that of the total Australian population which had an employed rate of 54%. The lower rate was due to both higher unemployment rates and lower participation rates. The lower employed rate for Indigenous people means that for each Indigenous person with a job, there are 4.6 Indigenous people without employment. In the total Australian population, for every person with a job there were 2.4 without employment.

Among the unemployed, more than 3 in 4 had been out of work and looking for work for three months or more, and half for a year or more. Lack of jobs, insufficient education, training and skills, and transport problems, were the main obstacles to finding work. In addition, a third of those not in the labour force said they wanted a job. Family responsibilities and study were given as the main reasons for not seeking work.

A major factor in influencing unemployment statistics is the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) scheme. Under this scheme, Indigenous people can voluntarily forgo their entitlement to unemployment benefits and partake in community development initiatives in return for wages equivalent to their forgone benefit entitlement. Just over a quarter of employed Indigenous people were working in a CDEP scheme while 40% worked in a public sector organisation and nearly a third of those in rural areas worked for an Indigenous community organisation. Figure 4 illustrates the participation rates in a variety of industries. The National Centre for Studies in Travel and Tourism (ATSIC, 1995:4) estimates that there were approximately 2 500 Indigenous people employed in the tourism industry, and 500 Indigenous tourism-related businesses in Australia.



**Fig 4 Industry of Employment 1991**

*SOURCE: ATSIC Statistical Services Strategic Development Unit, 1994*

### **2.10. Land**

Forty two communities (1 612 people) lacked formal land tenure on which the community was located. Thus they have no legal claim to their land and cannot, for instance, use it as collateral when applying for loans.

### **2.11. Language**

Of the more than 250 languages and over 700 dialects that have been recorded throughout Australia, fewer than half have more than 100 speakers today. One in 7 of those aged 13 and over spoke an Indigenous language. Difficulty with English was reported by 1 in 8; 72% of these would have used an interpreter service if one were available. Difficulties with English were more common among those aged 45 and over (17%) or who lived in rural areas (19%).

### **2.12. Summary**

This compilation of statistics and indicators show that Indigenous people are disadvantaged in many areas. It is apparent that past policy and practice have failed to provide sufficient development opportunities for Australia's Indigenous population. Tourism is currently being promoted as one avenue for development. While tourism has a number of potential problems, as will be discussed in subsequent chapters, the current Indigenous situation is so deplorable that all potential development paths should be thoroughly explored.



### **3. TOURISM AND DEVELOPMENT: A GENERAL OUTLINE**

#### **3.1. *Introduction***

Currently there is a substantial push, by both the Australian Government and by the tourism industry, for increased Indigenous participation in the tourism industry. As a prelude to exploring this area, this chapter briefly examines tourism, its relationship to development, and some of the issues arising from this interaction.

#### **3.2. *Tourism***

##### **3.2.1. Definition of tourism**

Tourism may be thought of as the relationships and phenomena arising out of the journeys and temporary stays of people travelling primarily for leisure or recreational purposes (Gunn, 1988:1). A defining feature of tourism is that it is a people business. Today the trend is toward the use of tourism and travel as synonymous terms. Some organisations and publications combine the terms "travel and tourism" to make it clear that both business and pleasure travel are included.

An alternative definition of tourism, and one that highlights some of the issues covered in this report, is that given by Mathieson and Wall (1982:1); "the study of tourism is the study of people away from their usual habitat, of the impacts that they have on the economic, physical and social well-being of their hosts. It involves the motivations and experiences of the tourists, the expectations of and adjustments made by residents of reception areas, and the roles played by the numerous agencies and institutions which intercede between them".

### 3.2.2. Historical development of tourism

It is important to appreciate the historical development of tourism, including the motivation for travel and the various forms of tourism that existed in the past, in order to better understand contemporary tourism. Until recently, participation was restricted to a select few who could afford both the time and money to travel. It was the Industrial Revolution, commencing in late eighteenth century in Europe, which created the basis for modern tourism development. This economic and social revolution greatly increased labour productivity, leading to larger-scale urbanisation, rapid growth of the middle class, better education levels, more leisure time, and greatly improved means of mass transportation. Thus increased leisure, higher incomes and greatly enhanced mobility combined to enable more people to partake of tourism. The proliferation of accommodation, and the growth of inclusive tours and other forms of relatively cheap vacation travel, have further extended the opportunity to travel for pleasure. Today the majority of people in the developed world, and increasing numbers in developing countries, are tourists at some time in their lives. Tourism is no longer the prerogative of a few but is an accepted and accustomed, even expected, part of the lifestyles of a large and growing number of people (Mathieson and Wall, 1982:1).

### 3.2.3. Contemporary tourism

The significance of tourism has been recognised in both developed and developing countries. This can be seen in the establishment of Government departments of tourism, widespread encouragement and sponsorship of tourist developments, and the proliferation of small businesses and multinational corporations contributing to and deriving benefits from the tourism industry. There is widespread optimism that tourism might be a powerful and beneficial agent of both economic and social change. Indeed, tourism has stimulated employment and investment, modified land use and economic structure, and make a positive contribution to the balance of payments in many countries throughout the world (Mathieson and Wall, 1982:1).

### *3.2.3.1. Tourist profiles*

International tourism is largely a phenomenon peculiar to industrialised countries; total arrivals in the OECD countries alone account for about 70% of the world total, while the tourism receipts of these twenty-four countries amount to a little over 80% of the world tourism receipts as a whole (Ascher, 1985:1).

In general, whatever the form of tourism, tourists are increasingly demanding high quality and well-planned but not necessarily more expensive destinations, and will bypass those places known to have environmental problems such as air, water, and noise pollution, congestion, poorly designed buildings, and unattractive views.

In terms of changing tourist profiles, the populations of many of the major market countries are ageing, and the senior citizen and retired persons tourist market is becoming a substantial one. The present-day retiree is better educated, more affluent, in better health and more active than in any preceding period. At the same time, youth tourism is being encouraged in many countries. A major trend is that there is increasing fragmentation of tourist markets, with more tourists wanting to actively engage in recreational and sporting activities, seek new destinations, develop special interests through travelling, and learn about and participate in local cultures (Inskeep, 1991:14 ; Witt and Moutinho, 1989:599). It is this last aspect in particular that is one of the focuses of this Report.

### *3.2.3.2. Demographic and social influences*

Changes in the demographic structure and social patterns of the populations of the developed and newly industrialised countries mean that, regardless of other factors, more people will have the time, inclination and income to travel (World Tourism Organisation, 1990:8). These changes include:

- the ageing of the population
- the increase in working women and double income households
- the growing proportion of single adults
- the trend towards later marriage and families
- the likely faster growth in the numbers of childless couples than in the overall population
- relaxation of immigration restrictions
- increased paid leave and more flexible working time
- earlier retirement
- increased awareness of travel possibilities

### **3.3. *Development***

#### **3.3.1. Definition of development**

The notion of development is very difficult to define. That there is no single, unequivocal definition of development is due in part to different uses of the term by different disciplines, and changes in those uses over time, particularly in the last three decades. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this Report, the outline of Mabogunje (1980:36) shall be adopted. It is not suggested that this outline should be taken as definitive; rather it is included to highlight the differing ways in which development may be viewed. Mabogunje identifies five approaches to development, the last of which is his own contribution. The approaches are:

Development as economic growth. In the early post Second World War period, development was interpreted narrowly in terms of economic growth with priority given to “increased commodity output rather than to the human beings involved in the production”. A common expression of this in the underdeveloped countries was concentration on export production and the emergence of a dual economy.

Development as modernisation. Later a social dimension was incorporated. Development, still in the sense of economic growth, came to be seen as part of a much wider process of social change described as modernisation. Education was seen to be a critical aspect of societal change, but modernisation also had a consumption dimension, i.e. "to be modern meant to endeavor to consume goods and services of the type usually manufactured in advanced industrial countries".

Development as distributive justice. By the late 1960's, attention was being increasingly turned to who was and was not getting the benefits of social and economic change. Furthermore, it also focused on who was paying the costs of development such as exposure to air and water pollution.

Development as socio-economic transformation. This interpretation is attributed to "scholars of a Marxist philosophical persuasion" who argue that the questions of distribution and social justice cannot be resolved independently of the prevailing mechanisms governing production and distribution.

Development as spatial reorganization. Mabogunje himself stresses the spatial dimension of development, i.e. "spatial reorganization is seen as synonymous with development in the sense that spatial forms represents physical realisations of patterns of social relations". Thus certain types of spatial arrangement can be expected to make a better contribution to the attainment of specified goals than others.

This classification system highlights the alternate ways in which development may be perceived, and in doing so, reinforces the notion that this is a complex multi-faceted area of study.

### 3.3.2. Tourism and development

The development literature generally ignores tourism, and few writers on that subject set their studies in the broader context of development. Few allude to tourism, despite its growing economic and social significance and use in development strategies in many developing countries over the last three decades. In this respect, tourism has been treated by development writers in the same way that they have ignored other service sectors. This is because much of the development debate has centred on the transition from an agricultural to an industrial society, and neglected tertiary activities.

It may well be asked whether it is worth concentrating on the development of tourism as such, rather than analysing development in general and leaving policy makers to draw appropriate conclusions for particular sectors. Several factors justify a focus on tourism. Tourism is, in some important respects, different from other potential export activities. The ultimate consumer of the goods and services comes to the exporting country, rather than having most goods and services delivered to the consumer's home country. Furthermore, the very presence of foreigners in the exporting country is widely believed to generate significant social effects by demonstrating alien and, what is arguably worse, unattainable life-styles and values (de Kadt, 1979:11).

Although this is not the place for a detailed account of recent trends in development thinking, there are a number of broad areas of concern that are relevant to tourism. First is the realisation that growth alone may not suffice to overcome poverty within a reasonable time, and that the distribution of the material benefits of development among the poorest countries (and in this case) the poorest population groups within individual countries, requires special attention. From arguments about the general effects of different development strategies on distribution of income, attention has come to rest on the staggering number of people, more than 900 million of them, living in absolute poverty. More than ever before, the development community is searching for means that will enable the poor to provide for their basic needs through more productive work, more widely

available social services, and increased participation in political decision-making. It needs to be considered whether the deliberate and large-scale development of tourism, conceived as a major net earner of foreign exchange, leads to results consistent with this newly identified goal of development.

The second area of discussion deals with the supposed causes of worldwide inequality and the workings of the international economic system. The contention is that no development strategy can hope to be successful without a restructuring of North-South economic relations as regards, for example, trade, investment, and the transfer of technology. The debate on this has been cast in terms of movement toward a New International Economic Order. More and more it is realised that major institutional structural adjustments will be needed in the industrialised countries if the poor nations are to achieve their development goals. For example, some non-restrictionist response will have to be found to the flow of manufactured exports from developing countries in growing competition with domestic industries in the rich world. Tourism, as an export industry that does not significantly threaten employment in industrialised countries, may find increasing favour in international discussions and negotiations.

Thirdly, "one-world" arguments question whether the pursuit, by all countries, of rapidly rising mass consumption will be feasible for much longer, given the consequent environmental deterioration and looming exhaustion of nonrenewable natural resources. According to this view, further rises in the consumption of the rich will increasingly conflict with attempts to improve the living standards of the poor. The consumption patterns of international tourism are a particularly conspicuous example of the consumerism that is now being challenged in the industrialised world; out of reach of the poor countries' masses but within the reach of their elites.

Finally, as the process of fostering development through tourism continues, various professional groups have become increasingly concerned with seeing that traditional people (the Indigenous and typically nonwestern and non-industrialised population) are equitably

treated and that tourism strategies do not impact upon such people in inequitable and unmitigated ways.

"Cultural conservation' is a policy science which strives to help decision makers assess the needs and vulnerabilities of traditional people when development strategies are being formulated. In general, the cultural conservation movement seeks to help traditional people and Indigenous populations practice self-determinism, to preserve their unique cultural heritage, and to deal effectively with the outside, and typically dominant, mainstream culture. Even where change is inevitable, cultural conservationists argue that careful attention must be given to preserving the dignity of people and the viability of cultural traditions as the society is transformed. Ultimately, traditions help people cope with the stress of "future shock". Where this is true, the traditional culture should be nurtured, not merely milked by tourism marketers for short-term benefits." (de Kadt, 1979:11 ; Walle, 1993:14)



## **4. INDIGENOUS TOURISM IN AUSTRALIA**

### **4.1. *Introduction***

As discussed previously, Indigenous people suffer a number of disadvantages in many areas including education, socio-economic status, and health. One means for improving these serious, long term problems may be to promote Indigenous tourism ventures. While tourism may produce many problems of its own, an informed approach may minimize these and bring an improved standard of living. In preference to the current welfare situation, this approach may provide Indigenous people with a greater sense of self sufficiency and esteem. This has been recognised by the Australian Government which has released an Indigenous tourism industry strategy (ATSIC and the Office of National Tourism, 1997)

### **4.2. *Demand for Indigenous cultural tourism***

Tourism is a growth industry in Australia. International arrivals are forecast to grow at an average rate of almost 9% per annum, while the number of domestic visitor nights is expected to grow at almost 2% per annum (Bureau of Tourism Research, 1997:1). The tourism market's increasing sophistication, with more visitors now seeking experiences which match their own interests in preference to "mass tourism" experiences, involves visitors who tend to spend more than tourists on packaged tours, making them important contributors to Australia's export earnings. There is a growing demand throughout the world for tourism experiences that involve interaction with Indigenous people and exposure to Indigenous cultures. As home to one of the world's oldest living cultures, Australia is well placed to open the window of opportunity presented by this interest.

Significant and increasing numbers of international visitors to Australia already include an Indigenous cultural experience in their visit. Around 380 000 international visitors, or 11% of the total, visited Indigenous sites and attractions in 1995, up by more than 50% from 250 000 in 1994. Interest is growing rapidly among visitors from Asia, with the greatest demand continuing to come from UK, European and North American visitors. (Department of Industry, Science & Tourism, 1997:1). However, data on tourist demand for Indigenous cultural product has been at best inconclusive and at worst inaccurate. Either way it has never been timely or continuous enough to be of practical value.

Surveys have been carried out by a range of Departments and Agencies over the past 15 years or so, but different methodologies limit the value of much of this research. In addition, there has been little focus on longitudinal data for trend monitoring. The industry cannot, with any confidence, answer questions regarding the strength of Aboriginality as a factor in the choice of holiday destination. Price, placement, access and satisfaction levels of those who have participated in an Indigenous tour product need to be monitored.

### ***4.3. Indigenous roles in tourism***

From a broad economic view, there are five avenues for Indigenous involvement in the tourism industry.

#### **4.3.1. Employers**

The development of tourism enterprises provides Indigenous people with the opportunity to become self-employed and to employ others. It is important that the responsibilities of employers, such as conforming to industrial awards, ensuring adequate insurance, and promoting workplace health and safety are undertaken.

#### 4.3.2. Employees

This avenue offers considerable scope for Indigenous people. With the growth of interest in Indigenous culture, many Indigenous people see the tourism industry as a potential employer. Conversely, there is a growing awareness within the industry of the desirability of Indigenous involvement, particularly as such involvement is often valued by overseas visitors. Nevertheless, a number of potential barriers to greater participation remain. These include such things as English as a second language, the remote location of many Indigenous people, racism, a lack of awareness amongst employers about encouraging Indigenous applicants etc.

#### 4.3.3. Investors

A number of Indigenous organisations have invested in tourism enterprises. These have mainly been community-based groups, investing income from sources such as land leases, mining royalties, compensation claims etc. There are a number of possible motivations for such investments. For instance, it provides the means for exerting control on an enterprise where that enterprise is likely to impact on the local community. Additionally, it can be used to increase employment prospects for local Indigenous people.

#### 4.3.4. Joint venture partners

Joint ventures allow the combination of Indigenous and non-Indigenous skills and resources. This can allow Indigenous people to tap into established enterprises, and also has the benefit of reducing risk. Furthermore, it provides the opportunity for Indigenous people to gain skills which can eventually be transferred to Indigenous ventures. Thus it can act as an intermediate step to self-determination.

#### 4.3.5. Providers of Indigenous cultural tourism products

Cultural tourism makes Indigenous culture highly visible, and it is the area where Indigenous Australians have unchallengeable specialisation and expertise. It is often not appreciated that a wide diversity of cultural practices exists within the Indigenous group. The major component of the cultural tourism sector, the arts and crafts market, is valued at approximately 200 million dollars per year. Other components are valued at only approximately 5 million dollars per year. Cultural tourism is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

#### 4.4. *Government's role in tourism*

Tourism was one of the three industries identified in the Commonwealth Government's response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody as offering opportunities for greater participation by Indigenous people. As a consequence, the Government has initiated the development of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Strategy "to enhance opportunities for self-determination, self-management and economic self-sufficiency in tourism for Indigenous Australians." (ATSIC and the Office of National Tourism, 1997). The three objectives of the Strategy are:

- to remove obstacles to increases Indigenous participation in the tourism industry, as investors, joint venture partners, employers (including operators) and employees.
- to assist Indigenous people to present their culture to tourists in a way which is acceptable to Indigenous communities and which also provides a valuable tourism experience.
- to assist Indigenous people in choosing how they wish to participate in the tourism industry and building their capacity to contribute to the industry.

A recent press release from Senator John Herron, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, outlined the Government's position. He stated that "the Government was working towards economic independence for Indigenous Australians. Tourism offers Indigenous people important economic opportunities and a stimulus to preserve and reinvigorate cultural activities. Indigenous tourism has the potential to provide a path to economic independence for Indigenous people and to contribute significantly to the competitiveness of the Australian tourism industry, which benefits all Australians" (Herron, 1997).

#### **4.5. Summary**

The growth of tourism, and in particular cultural tourism, has provided Australia's Indigenous people with new possibilities. This potential has been enhanced by the development of the Indigenous tourism industry strategy. While this new avenue offers potential benefits, there are numerous pitfalls which have received limited attention. It is important that negative aspects are publicised so that Indigenous people can make an informed decision about whether to be involved in tourism or not. If they do decide to enter the industry, then an awareness of the potential problems can be used to at least minimise their impact.

## **5. Potential Constraints to Participation**

### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter deals with barriers to the entry of Indigenous people into the tourism industry. Constraints, in this context, are identified as factors acting before entry, as opposed to impacts which act after entry. Given that tourism is being promoted to Indigenous Australia in a largely positive light, it is important that there be an awareness of potential pitfalls as well.

### **5.2. Socio-cultural constraints**

#### **5.2.1. Cultural collision**

Australian Indigenous cultures have developed over some 60 000 years in relative isolation from the rest of the world. It is not surprising then that there are a number of cultural values which do not mesh with those of Western consumerist society. For instance, Indigenous culture does not have an equivalent to tourism (NTTTC, 1991:52).

Indigenous involvement in tourism can be divided into direct and indirect types. Direct tourism involves a social interaction between hosts and tourists, whereas indirect involvement requires no such interaction. The latter is most clearly exemplified by the manufacture of Indigenous artefacts for sale. In many remote communities, for example, a desire to share in tourism's potential to generate wealth is balanced by a preference for indirect dealings with tourists. Consequently, art and craft production provides a welcome alternative to intensive personal interactions (WA Tourism Commission, 1993:79).

Similarly those involved in tourism public relations should ideally create a relaxed, comfortable and enjoyable atmosphere. While Aboriginal people are usually polite with strangers, to be spontaneously "enjoyable" could be seen as offensive and discourteous in an Indigenous social context (NTTITC, 1991:71).

Another difficulty faced by Indigenous people is the role that differing members of the community play. Particular traditional owners own stories associated with land or places of special significance to them. Therefore it is wrong for someone else to relay stories without permission from the owner. Thus guides would have to have a certain relationship with the owner(s) to gain access to stories.

Indigenous people operate within the bounds of socially defined relationships. Tourists generally have no such relations with Aboriginal people and this means there are no defined methods of relating to them. In addition, they do not know where they come from. This is disturbing for Aboriginal communities which have sophisticated kinship systems which attempt to place everyone within a known relationship. The result is that tourism can be physically and emotionally challenging for many Indigenous people. This is only compounded by having to deal with many tourists in short periods of time, and by the intensive nature of cultural tourism (Central Land Council, 1993:21).

Aborigines are traditionally a nomadic people while tourism can be a demanding full time business. Commitment to full-time employment stifles mobility (the traditional "walkabout"), and makes it difficult to maintain links with other Aboriginal people and communities. This can result in a commitment which may not suit some individuals and communities.

#### 5.2.2. Religion and spirituality

Despite the high tourist interest in Indigenous religion, mythology and ceremonies, Indigenous people find it difficult to supply these cultural elements to tourists. The problem relates to elements of Indigenous culture, like the secret nature of some ceremonies, which limit their

incorporation into the tourist industry and which also may explain why Aborigines find indirect tourism more acceptable (Altman, 1988:25).

There are many performances which have spiritual significance and which are not appropriate for presentation to people outside the local community. Other facets can only be discussed if the visitor can establish a close rapport with the Indigenous community, which takes time most tourists do not have (NTTITC, 1991:71).

Understanding of spirituality is a most important aspect for the future relationship between the tourism industry and Indigenous people. In Rome, the Vatican tightly controls the way in which Catholicism and revered objects such as the Sistine Chapel are presented to visitors. The same measure of respect has to be achieved for Indigenous culture if a long term partnership between the two parties is to exist.

### 5.2.3. Communication

For Indigenous tourism, major opportunities lie in the transfer of Indigenous information and skills relating to their environment and culture. While Indigenous people can express their knowledge of trees, plants, fish and wildlife in Indigenous terms, they are less able to do so in a way that can be understood, or related to, by tourists (ATSIC, 1994:283).

Therefore enhanced Indigenous participation in the tourism industry requires increased English literacy and numeracy skills. Currently, most Indigenous students leave school by year 10 and many, according to industry sources, are unable to fill out application forms. Other factors that limit communication include a tendency for Indigenous people not to make eye contact, a lack of self-confidence in front of non-Indigenous groups, and the international origin of many tourists (NTTITC, 1991:282).



#### 5.2.4. Loss of culture

Cultural tourism is dependent on the existence of cultural knowledge and the appropriate communication of this knowledge. If an adequate supply of cultural knowledge is not maintained, demand will cease to exist. In most parts of Australia, there has been massive loss of traditional cultural knowledge and resources, as well as some separation from ancestral lands. Communities in southern Australia in particular have suffered significant loss of traditional language and customary practice. In northern and central Australia there are some areas where traditions are still strong, but it is recognised that considerable effort is necessary to maintain this knowledge, and there are areas where lost traditions need to be recovered.

There is concern amongst Indigenous communities that many of the skills possessed by the elders are not being passed on to the younger generation and therefore will soon be lost, not only to the Aboriginal people, but also to those who seek to experience and learn from the culture.

While some support is available through ATSIC programs under CDEP and Regional Development and Training, there is a need for greater financial support to be provided for the determination and preservation of traditional skills.

#### 5.2.5. Indigenous attitudes towards tourism

A vital component of Indigenous tourism is, of course, the attitudes and interest levels of the Indigenous communities themselves.

Some Indigenous people have negative attitudes towards tourism. This reflects their past and present experiences of tourism, where passive Aboriginal involvement was considered to be of an exploitative nature. Furthermore, some tourists exhibit behaviour which is offensive and insensitive to Indigenous people and their culture, and intrusive to their lifestyles. Another aspect is that some Indigenous people find it hard to provide deferential treatment towards those they

consider their oppressors. All of these factors can create disillusionment with tourists and the tourism industry.

One study found that Aborigines accepted and understood the potential value of tourism to the local economy, although they were unclear about what their future involvement in the industry might be. The Aborigines were willing to participate in selective tourist activities, and expressed a strong desire that tourists should learn about Aboriginal people and their country. Some 64% of those interviewed had worked in the tourist industry, and 77% wanted further employment in tourism. Additionally, 8% of tourists wanted direct contact with Aboriginal people and 71% expressed a desire for more information about Aboriginal people and culture (Snowdon and Alexander, 1986:75).

Another study aimed to determine Aboriginal perceptions of visitors to Kakadu to assist in the formation of Park policy (Lawrence, 1985:116). Qualitative data was gleaned by using two survey methods: direct observation of the Aboriginal residents and traditional owners of Kakadu National Park; and interviews with Aboriginal people involved in the administration of the Park and from the Gagudju Association. The study found that Aborigines perceive tourism at Kakadu National Park as inevitable, in the same way that missions, buffalo hunting and mining occurred in the Park. While tourism was seen as the only way to preserve the Park, the Aborigines nevertheless viewed tourism with some ambiguity; seeing it as a possible route to both their demise and the salvation of Aboriginal culture.

A systematic survey of Aboriginal attitudes to tourism was conducted as part of the Ayers Rock Region Tourism Impact Study (Central Land Council, 1987:15). A 48 question survey was administered to 58 Anangu adults, representing 85% of the adult population, at Mutijulu in 1985 and 1986. The study revealed that very few Anangu (5%) felt that tourists came to see them. Nevertheless, a substantial portion (69%) felt that it was good for tourists to learn about the Anangu way of life. A number of questions were asked that related specifically to tourist-oriented commercial activities. There was very strong (93%) support for the decision to close off the

Mutijulu community to tourists and to locate the two Aboriginal owned craft enterprises away from the community at the ANPWS park entry station.

Foster and Tegg (1985:83) note that traditional owners have a stronger view than the government officials on the importance tourism plays in the overall economic development of the Northern Territory. They go on to suggest that the traditional owners strong attachment to the tourism development panacea is founded on very obvious misunderstandings of market forces, competition and the capitalist system. Thus there is a real danger that, in the absence of a fully informed position, traditional owners may discover various negative consequences to their entry into tourism.

However, not all Indigenous people are favourably disposed towards tourism entry as indicated by the following quote:

"Tourism has placed a heavy demand on our natural resources. The industry has not done us any favours, yet it amazes me that so many of our people want to become involved. Our culture is our way of life and the essence of our being; cultural tourism is not merely a commercial proposition. For this reason, I emphasise that as it stands today, the industry offers little opportunity for Aboriginal people" (Cultural Tourism Awareness Workshop, 1993:86).

### **5.3. *Economic constraints***

#### **5.3.1. Economies of scale**

Many Indigenous tourism enterprises are small businesses. While this allows Indigenous control, it does rule out economies of scale. Thus such operations must carry their own accounting, sales, marketing and operational resources and yet not use them to full capacity at all times. Furthermore, small operators they are more exposed to the impacts of seasonality. Thus in the high season, their resources are less likely to be able to handle additional demand than are other

operators. Conversely, they may not have a sufficient depth of resources to carry them through the low season (Burchett, 1993:22).

A fundamental question concerns the practicality of Indigenous people controlling all aspects of a tourism venture. While the appropriateness of this is unquestionable, Indigenous experience in managing tourism operations is at a relatively early stage and thus there is some merit in considering joint ventures with non-Indigenous persons or organisations. This is especially the case as Indigenous operators often have minimal capital, management skills, financial expertise, and have often been reliant upon outside agencies for much of their management and marketing. Frequently, provision of business expertise by the non-Indigenous partner, and provision of the product by the Indigenous partner represents the fastest and most effective way of achieving goals (ATSIC, 1994:260).

### 5.3.2. Business development

The development of business management models which are culturally appropriate to Aboriginal society needs much attention. Businesses not structured with an understanding of cultural realities run the risk of creating tension and disharmony with associated impact on profitability (Northern Territory Tourist Commission & the Office of Aboriginal Development, 1996:11).

Where there are mainstream business advisory services, these need to be accessible to Indigenous people, and responsive to particular cultural considerations that may apply to Indigenous cultural industries.

Business mentors have sometimes been useful in providing regular assistance to an Indigenous enterprise. There are some potential pitfalls if the mentor does not have a good understanding of Indigenous cultures, and places priority on conventional business practices above all other considerations. The operating environment of many Indigenous enterprises demands a modification to conventional practices, in recognition of available skill levels, social relationships between people, and non-economic objectives of the participants (ATSIC, 1997:27).

### 5.3.3. Funding

#### *5.3.3.1. Obtaining financial assistance*

Indigenous people wishing to develop enterprises often do not have a financial base to begin with and have difficulty in obtaining finance. Their relative lack of assets may limit the extent that they can borrow; they may not own their own houses, for example, and community owned assets such as land may not be acceptable security. This can be a substantial impediment for those Indigenous communities or individuals interested in the autonomy of possessing their own tourism enterprises (ATSIC, 1997:30). This is particularly pertinent as in the tourist industry, the lead times are longer than in many industries. It can easily take up to two years after the first operations to become known at the point of sale (ATSIC, 1994:264).

Support for Indigenous cultural industries has in the past been highly fragmented between government agencies, and lacking clear whole-of-government direction. While there has been some attempt by umbrella agencies such as ATSIC to pick up on the areas excluded by other agencies, the lack of formal co-ordination has not led to optimal results (ATSIC, 1997:45). ATSIC currently provides funding under a range of schemes to communities and organisations on an annual basis. However, ATSIC is generally considered a difficult source of business funding by many Indigenous people. A recurring problem is that there are few other funding options available for Indigenous people (ATSIC, 1994:245). One promising suggestion has been to link ATSIC funds with those of existing venture capital specialists in the tourism industry. This would enable the venture capitalist to expand the funding base and reduce risk via a thorough commercial evaluation of the enterprise. Furthermore, the venture capitalist would plan an exit strategy from the project over a 3-5 year period. However, until departure, they would hold a position on the Board and closely monitor financial performance, systems and control and generally infuse a strong commercial discipline for the future. Furthermore, this type of operation

would help produce role models for new enterprise developments in Indigenous tourism (ATSIC, 1994:270).

Another financial limitation is that community owned land may not be acceptable security. The precise form of title for much of this Indigenous land carries with it a zero valuation in commercial terms. If a community or individual wishes to establish a new tourism venture on part of this land, a lending institution would not be able to take the land into account in determining the collateral for a loan, as the title is inalienable. This in effect means that it cannot be annexed and mortgaged as part of a development. Therefore, a lending institution could only take into account the salvage value of the improvements on the land in the form of buildings and other removable assets. It is unlikely that a loan based on the salvage value of improvements would be sufficient to initiate the project in the first place. Indigenous people in Australia have strived for many years to achieve a breakthrough in securing tenure over some of their traditional lands. While to some it may be early days, many community organisations now control some substantial parcels of land that have a very positive potential value for tourism purposes.

#### *5.3.3.2. Awareness of sources of funds*

A lack of awareness of available options represents another constraint to securing finance. There is a need for a clearer and more accessible process by which individuals and groups can gain access to government and non-government funding processes (ATSIC, 1994:265).

#### *5.3.3.3. Allocation of funding*

In some circumstances where ventures have been funded, there has been provision for some aspects of the business but not for others. The costs of planning and development have not been recognised or funded, and finance for areas such as training, adequate management, and business advice has not been forthcoming. If cultural tourism is based on the strength of local culture, it follows that there needs to be constant reinvestment from tourism to maintain cultural resources.

This is an area which needs greater attention both in educational and financial terms (ATSIC and the Office of National Tourism, 1997:19).

#### **5.4. Educational constraints**

##### **5.4.1. Business and tourism knowledge**

Indigenous knowledge of the tourism industry varies widely. In many cases, Indigenous people find it difficult to appreciate the impact tourism will have on their community or personal lifestyle. Furthermore, they have limited knowledge of how to monitor the changes that tourism will impose on them. In some cases, there is an expectation that tourism will deliver vast sums of money. However, relatively few Indigenous people have the necessary experience in the market to realise a successful tourist venture. There is little appreciation of product marketing, sales promotions, and the importance of networking with other tourist ventures to generate the requisite conditions for success in sales and customer satisfaction (Finlayson, 1990:94).

It is recognised that the tourism industry is loath to share information with newcomers. It has been often assumed that the industry will brief new operators. This is particularly assumed in the case where the operator is Indigenous. This reflects the somewhat utopian concept of innate socialism within Indigenous societies (Burchett, 1993:24). A further constraint is that Indigenous communities are not well integrated with the wider community and are thus unlikely to be in a position to undertake large-scale or concentrated involvement in tourism.

Finally, it is important that communities are aware of the implications of a growing visitor industry and that they can turn to the experiences of others to assist in putting into place the appropriate management and control mechanisms.

#### 5.4.2. Business and tourism training

One of the key factors for success in the tourism industry is suitable education and training (ATSIC, 1994:276). There are three main components to training for Indigenous tourism ventures :

- training in cultural practices and values, best provided by elders within the specific community (but sometimes involving cultural exchange between Indigenous communities)
- training in specific techniques, including use of materials, which can often be provided by non-Indigenous specialists in these techniques
- training in business skills including business establishment, management, product development, promotion and marketing.

Tourists have indicated in qualitative research conducted by NTTC (1994:41) that they are seeking more accurate information about Aboriginal people and their culture. The most effective means of providing this information is to have a greater number of suitably qualified Aboriginal people employed in the industry. Given that there are insufficient numbers of suitably qualified Indigenous people available to serve the current tourist market, a strategy is required to meet this area of tourist demand.

One method to meet this demand could be for mainstream training agencies to provide training in non-traditional techniques and modern business skills. In conflict with this approach is the apparent reluctance of Indigenous people to participate in mainstream training. This can be because of a lack of confidence in mixing with non-Indigenous people, and sometimes there are problems of literacy and numeracy that are obstacles to learning.

The remote location of many Indigenous people further compounds this problem. While some training institutions have the potential to cater for the training needs of Indigenous people living



in or near urban areas, there remains a need to train Indigenous people living in remote areas (ATSIC, 1994:297).

Business training is required specifically for those Indigenous people already in, or planning to participate in, the tourism industry. Such training would focus on the responsibilities and requirements of entering into business. Communities also need training in how to write submissions for funding and how to prepare business plans (ATSIC, 1994:283). The issue of education and training is discussed in greater depth in Chapter 7.

## **5.5. *Physical constraints***

### **5.5.1. Infrastructure**

Although there have been big improvements in recent years (e.g. in telecommunications, and power), there are significant shortfalls in the provision of infrastructure to Indigenous communities that inhibit development of enterprises in those communities. It must be realised that most Aboriginal tourism ventures start from an entirely different base from that of mainstream operations. For example, the physical infrastructure within a community is often inadequate: lack of a good water supply, insufficient ablution and laundry facilities, no maintenance or wash-down facilities for vehicles etc. This is particularly true of remote communities where installation and maintenance of infrastructure is both more expensive and difficult. Furthermore, remote communities often do not have easy access to associated infrastructure and services (a food caterer for example) which means that extra demands are placed on the community itself. Thus it is generally easier to develop Indigenous cultural tourism where tourists already visit, and can be linked to existing transport and accommodation infrastructure.

### 5.5.2. Transport and access

While there are opportunities for a wide range of Indigenous tourism ventures, there are particular problems in developing tourism in more remote areas. Many Indigenous communities are located away from the major tourism gateways in the more remote regions of Australia. The very isolation of such communities means that they often have strong cultural resources. Nevertheless, tourists must expend relatively large amounts of time and money to visit them, which jeopardises their tourism viability. Furthermore, tourists who have made a substantial investment to visit a remote venture have raised expectations which can be difficult to meet. It can not be ignored that there is a higher demand for Indigenous tourism near to the main centres of visitation (ATSIC and the Office of National Tourism, 1997:7).

This is not to suggest that access is the only consideration in the development of a tourism enterprise, but there are many examples where its importance has been ignored and the results have been disastrous, whether the tourism venture is Indigenous or otherwise.

### 5.5.3. Land ownership and access

Attachment to and knowledge of land is often the focus for Indigenous tourism. It is recognised that for some Indigenous people, having fought for the return of their land over a long period of time, the concept of allowing access to that land for tourism will be unpalatable. For others, the fear that tourists will degrade land and sacred sites, or will impact on their lifestyle, will be factors in their decision to refuse land access.

It is sometimes felt that visitors will not have sufficient knowledge of Indigenous cultural traditions to demonstrate the respect for the land required by the owners of the land (Northern Territory Tourist Commission, 1994:30). For instance, "tourists are ignorant and unaware of the fact that they are on Aboriginal land; they bring a lot of rubbish into remote community areas and leave it behind; they are unaware of weather patterns and their resultant problems; they

deplete fish stocks out of season; they bring too many 4-wheel drives; they deface rock art with graffiti; they steal relics; they destroy community property" (Cultural Tourism Awareness Workshop, 1993:16).

Nevertheless, the Indigenous system of land ownership allows the sharing of resources if certain proprieties are observed, and due respect is shown to traditional owners. Bill Neijie, a traditional owner of the Kakadu National Park area, presents this concern regarding tourism:

"It's good for balanda (white people) to learn about the Aboriginal way of life. I would like to see someone guard the sites all the time. I have been worried about balanda going into places where only certain Aboriginal men should go. It should be the traditional owners who decide what happens to their sites and land" (NTTITC, 1991:20).

## **5.6. The tourism industry**

### **5.6.1. Industry attitudes**

The tourism industry, through its attitudes towards Indigenous Australians, also presents a number of constraints to involvement in tourism. Consultations with the tourism industry (ATSIC, 1994:259) raised several issues that relate to Indigenous involvement in the industry. These issues include the following:

- Racism hinders employment. This was identified more readily by non-Indigenous people than by Indigenous people. It was given as a reason by a minority of operators for lack of employment in the tourism industry.
- Fear and trepidation of perceived hostility prevents some employers considering Indigenous employment or identifying positions under Section 13 of the Anti-discrimination Act when this may be appropriate for the sale of artefacts and running tours to sites.

- Stereotyping. There is a perception that Indigenous people will not turn up for work. This view was held even if the employer lacked personal experience with employing Indigenous people. Furthermore, the view was held despite the fact that where Indigenous employment exists (e.g. in National Parks), this did not seem to be a problem.
- Lack of effort and lack of will on the part of tour operators to find a way to employ Indigenous people.
- Lack of appreciation of the uniqueness of Australian Indigenous culture.
- Potential employers do not know how to go about employing Indigenous people, and do not know how to contact Indigenous people.
- The small size of many businesses. Many tourists and hospitality businesses are family run, and not large enough to support additional employees.

In order to combat these negative views, Indigenous enterprises must ensure they provide tourists with a high quality experience which contributes to a heightened appreciation of their natural and cultural heritage. They also need to promote opportunities for increased knowledge of local Indigenous culture and lifestyle for the non-Indigenous tourism industry, and in particular for tour operators, sales and front office staff, and distribution channels and community leaders.

#### 5.6.2. Industry recognition

Many in the tourism industry demonstrate a lack of familiarity and understanding of Indigenous people and their culture, with some not knowing anything apart from what they read or hear in the media. The degree of difficulty attached to achieving an industry awareness of and, equally important, industry confidence in, the culture and their products is quite substantial. Thus there

needs to be confidence in operational standards, reliability and professionalism, as well as the overcoming entrenched negative stereotyping (Burchett, 1993: 23).

One approach in this direction has the suggestion for a tour operator accreditation system by which visitors and industry are able to identify tour operators who deliver accurate information about Indigenous issues and operate within appropriate cultural protocols.

#### 5.6.3. Industry representation

Overall, the Indigenous tourism sector is not well represented with the Australian Tourism Commission (ATC) and the various State Tourism Commissions. There is an urgent need for ATSIC to liaise with the Australian Standing Committee on Tourism (ASCOT). ASCOT, which is comprised of State Tourism Commissions, the ATC and the Department of Tourism, provides a forum for discussion a range of tourism policy issues (ATSIC, 1994:271).

### 5.7. *Summary*

As delineated in this chapter, there are a range of constraints to Indigenous involvement in tourism. This does not represent all possible barriers as some, such as the poor health of Indigenous people, are not discussed here. At present, many Indigenous people considering entry into tourism would probably be doing so without being fully aware of all the constraints to be surpassed. Awareness of these constraints would allow a more informed decision, with greater subsequent chances of success. While some of the constraints are not easily overcome (remoteness for example), others such as training are more amenable to change. Despite all of these barriers, they can be overcome as shown by the existence of a growing number of successful Indigenous enterprises.

## **6. TOURISM IMPACTS**

### **6.1. *Introduction***

While the previous chapter looked at constraints, i.e. factors limiting Indigenous entry into tourism, this chapter examines impacts, which result after entry. Tourism is a multi-faceted process that creates a variety of real and potential impacts. It is important to be aware of such impacts as they may have positive and/or negative dimensions, and because they can affect all stakeholders in the tourism industry. While economic and environmental impacts receive much attention, socio-cultural impacts are frequently overlooked. This in part stems from the fact that socio-cultural impacts are much more difficult to quantify. The purpose of this chapter then is to examine the area of socio-cultural impacts in the context of Indigenous tourism in Australia.

As impacts feature so heavily in tourism and development literature, it is useful to understand some of the methodology and limitations involved with their measurement. Some of the issues involved with impact assessment are explored in the following section.

### **6.2. *Impact assessment***

#### **6.2.1. Techniques**

There are various technical assessment techniques which are currently being utilised such as environmental impact assessment, cost-benefit analysis, social impact assessment etc. Accompanying the many techniques are continual discrepancies and criticism of their value. As this chapter is primarily concerned with socio-cultural impacts, only social impact assessment techniques are examined.

Social impact assessment is one of the more recognised techniques which uses social research, public participation, monitoring and community development to anticipate and act on the implications of major decisions for society. It is also one of the most difficult forms of impact assessment, as much of the data concerning the more crucial social variables are qualitative in nature and don't lend themselves to the quantitative analyses and projection techniques that decision makers are used to evaluating.

Inskip (1991:365) sees attitudinal surveys of hosts, surveys of tourist characteristics, attitudes and expenditure patterns as important means of obtaining information on social impacts. Hosts are the best judges of changes which are affecting them so they are the people who must feature in research. For instance, the New Zealand Ministry of Tourism (1992:13) investigated public attitudes on a wide range of tourism issues and formulated a Tourism Acceptance Index to measure local feelings. Similarly, there have been attempts in the United States to develop a multiple-item attitudinal scale for measuring resident attitudes towards tourism, and to assess the effects of selected "independent" variables identified from the literature on resident's attitudes toward tourism development (Lankford and Howard, 1992:123). Identifying and analysing the motivations of tourists can also be of value when trying to assess their subsequent impact.

#### 6.2.2. Assessment problems

The general outline of the impact assessment process appears relatively straightforward; impacts are first described, then quantified and lastly evaluated by assigning values to the impacts. However this process is not without its difficulties.

Firstly, it is very hard to trace and monitor impacts as primary impacts give rise to secondary and tertiary impacts.

Secondly, tourism is dynamic and so impacts are constantly varying due to factors such as changes in the needs of both the tourists and their hosts, technological progress, and other

developments in the tourist industry itself. This implies that impacts will change through time and that periodic monitoring is required (Mathieson and Wall, 1982:232).

Thirdly is the question of which impact indicators should be used and what do they really mean? For example, what is the significance of prostitution and an increased crime rate when compared with traffic congestion or an expanded tax base? There is a need to assign relative weightings to impacts which can be very difficult.

Finally, regardless of which technique is employed, it is important to realise that grouping subjects inevitably creates discrepancies and bias. Individuals will feel differently depending on their reliance on tourism, their length of residence, their involvement in tourism decision making, and their level of contact with the tourists, to name just a few factors involved. Therefore, impact can often only be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

### **6.3. *Socio-cultural impacts***

#### **6.3.1. Overview**

Tourism has developed in a number of different physical, social/cultural, political and economic contexts. Consideration of contextual characteristics - the nature of the place in which tourism develops - is important, for the context will influence the way in which tourism evolves and will condition the impact which tourism will have (World Tourism Organisation, 1990:29).

The ratio of visitors to hosts, known as the density ratio, influences social impact. Generally, a lower ratio results in less social impact. The tendency for some visitors to travel in groups means that they usually have a greater effect on hosts than individual travellers do. The time frame of tourism is also important. Tourism that is developed slowly gives hosts more time to get used to the visitors, and also allows more chance for public participation in decision making.



### 6.3.2. Cultural homogenisation

Much promotion of Indigenous Australia has portrayed a single Indigenous culture; one where boomerangs, didgeridoos, X-ray style painting and stereotyped imagery are dominant. This occurs in spite of the fact that there exists a tremendous diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, not just one. For instance, the Indigenous grouping includes over 250 languages and 700 dialects.

This "monocultural" marketing has a number of effects. One is that the frequent misuse of Indigenous images is often offensive to Indigenous people (ATSIC, 1994:117). Another is that such marketing is felt to be reinforcing stereotypes of Indigenous Australians. Finally, such marketing raises tourists expectations in ways that cannot always be fulfilled. For instance, the didgeridoo is traditionally used by only some Indigenous groups.

### 6.3.3. Cultural immobility

There is a danger of Indigenous people being placed in a "zoo" or "living museum" situation, with tourist onlookers who are "more fascinated than ever, for a few days a year, by all the reverse images of their modernity" (Ascher, 1985:6). In such a context, tourist demand for an "authentic" (i.e. pre-contact) experience creates an impediment to cultural development. This situation is not helped by marketing, which almost exclusively presents images of an ancient culture, rather than portraying any modern connotation. Thus the challenge for Indigenous people is to maintain dynamic living cultures with contemporary expression derived from, but not prescribed by, traditional values (ATSIC and the Office of National Tourism, 1997:23).

### 6.3.4. Cultural modification

The use of a culture as the basis for the development of a tourism product may influence the form that it takes, changing some dimensions, promoting some aspects and diminishing others. Dogan

(1989:43) makes the point that the age of hosts strongly influences impacts. Those who are younger tend to be more susceptible to modern consumerism while the older people remain more traditional in their way of life.

Frequently, cultural tourism providers are expected to adjust to fashion, mainstream taste, customer expectations, or even transient fads (Walle, 1993:6). For instance, it has been found that artefact sales can be influenced by such factors as whether the item could fit into a suitcase, and whether the item had colouring that complemented currently fashionable home decorating colours (Finlayson, 1990:63). The impact of cultural product manipulation, however, goes beyond the potential of causing psychic trauma. Firms and organisations that provide tourism services will generally be prosperous long after trends change. In contrast, peoples that have altered their traditions have also potentially alienated connoisseurs and other long-term clients and thus endangered their tourism viability (Walle, 1993:16).

Tourism can lead to a "revolution of rising expectations" via the introduction of social models from the industrialised countries. Its "effectiveness" in this respect is partly due to the fact that tourism involves production and consumption at the same time and in the same place: it therefore simultaneously disseminates the production and consumption relationships of industrialised countries. It is for this reason that some writers view tourism as one of the most effective instruments for disseminating the social and cultural models of industrialised countries, and hence as a powerful means of domination and exploitation (Ascher, 1985:11). Another aspect of this interaction is that it can contribute to a push for modernisation without the prior industrial phase of development experienced in Europe and North America in the last century (Lea, 1988:71).

#### 6.3.5. Cultural appropriation

As Indigenous culture becomes more widely recognised and lucrative, it becomes more susceptible to misappropriation for commercial gain. The arts and crafts sector is particularly susceptible to imitation. The most persistent breach of rights is the misappropriation of graphic

designs without acknowledgment or payment of the artist, and this is seen in some promotional materials used within the tourism industry, as well as some mass produced clothing.

Aboriginality is an important marketing hook for Australia. It is as important to the imaging of Australia as Uluru, the Great Barrier Reef or the Sydney Opera House (ATSIC, 1994:117). This is generally viewed by Indigenous people as exploitative and as an imbalance that needs to be reversed. It can be viewed of as yet another example of a dominant culture taking control of an Indigenous resource as soon as its value became apparent.

#### 6.3.6. Cultural revival and maintenance

Indigenous cultural tourism opportunities can often encourage people to value their cultural heritage. Through the opportunity to explain their culture and traditions (and thereby keep those traditions alive), tourism provides an incentive to re-invigorate an interest and knowledge of traditional skills and values. This is seen as particularly important to the younger generations who are increasingly exposed to modern day values. It can also provide an avenue for redressing the myths and inaccuracies that have been perpetuated over the years.

Sometimes there is conflict between tourism and cultural maintenance. For example, there is often tension between use of cultural centres for tourism and use by local people for cultural purposes.

#### 6.3.7. Lifestyle modification

Tourists can impact strongly on the hosts' lifestyles in a number of ways. Tourism, and particularly cultural tourism, is by nature intrusive. Masses of tourists can produce congestion and competition for local services, both detrimental to the host society. Ignorance of Indigenous law and culture can leave host communities shocked by the irreverence of tourists. New ideas and

physical changes can be disrupting as well as helpful. Finally the social patterns of leadership and political power can be shifted away from traditional locals to newcomers (Gunn, 1988:9).

Other negative impacts of tourism have been observed: growth in crime, conflicts in values, loss of local culture, growth of frustration, resentment, and hostility. Jafari (1973:7) observed what he calls "premature departure to modernisation" a too-swift and abrupt social upheaval.

Some writers have gone so far to claim that "it is perfectly legitimate to compare tourists with barbarian tribes. Both involve the mass migration of people who collide with cultures far removed from their own" (Turner and Ash, 1975:1).

#### 6.3.8. Impacts on tourists

Thus far, only impacts on the host communities have been examined. However it is also possible for hosts to impact on tourists. Tourism can help to validate a culture and lead to a tangible recognition of traditional people and their accomplishments. The respect many tourists show for a peoples' traditions is an example of that potential. Thus, while tourists generally only have brief contact with host communities, it is possible for them to take away an enriched and more positive view of Indigenous people. However, potential for the converse exists also. For instance, notions of primitivity may be reinforced in the minds of some visitors, especially where consumer demand forces hosts to exhibit only pre-contact culture.

#### 6.4. *Summary*

The nature and degree of the impacts of tourism on Indigenous communities is not well understood, either by the communities themselves or by the tourism industry, primarily due to a lack of substantive research on this issue. The experience of overseas Indigenous communities in this area have, on the whole, not been very positive (Burchett, 1993:20). While the Government and the tourism industry have been strongly promoting Indigenous tourism, they have not provided much information on possible adverse impacts of involvement. Thus there is a strong need for reliable and relevant information to be provided to potential host communities.

## **7. EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR INDIGENOUS TOURISM**

### **7.1. *Introduction***

As highlighted in previous chapters, there are numerous constraints and impacts which can impact on Indigenous tourism ventures. In this final chapter one critical determinant of success, namely education and training, which tends to receive limited attention, is explored in further detail. In this Report, education is used to denote the acquiring of fundamental skills and knowledge that are required for use in many areas. Training is used to denote the acquiring of skills and knowledge that have a more limited focus; often one that is vocational in nature.

Education and training are vital for a number of reasons. Firstly, it can provide the specific knowledge and skills required for success in tourism and business ventures. Secondly, it can empower Indigenous people in all aspects of their lives, and not just in an occupational context. Thirdly, it can equip participants to make informed decisions about whether they should enter into tourism in the first place, and, once involved, whether it is beneficial to remain in the venture. Finally, it can enhance the ability of Indigenous people to communicate the unique aspects of their culture to tourists. Despite these clear potential benefits, the training issues and requirements associated with Indigenous tourism are very complex and interrelated with other areas of Indigenous development. This chapter, then, will explore some of the factors that are important in Indigenous education and training, including training requirements, the effects of specific cultural factors, and the vital role of basic education. Discussion of basic education, including primary and secondary schooling, is included as such education underpins success in later training programs. Furthermore, there has been a comparative wealth of research into primary and secondary-level Indigenous education. Some of the conclusions of this research can be usefully extended to

include the vocational training that is involved in entry to, and continued participation in, the tourism industry.

## **7.2. *The role of education***

The Department of Employment, Education and Training (1993:3) identified four key areas where the educational disadvantages of Indigenous people needed to be addressed. They were the need for:

- greater involvement in decisions about education and delivery of education
- access equal to the rest of the population to education at all levels
- to take part in all levels of education
- fair educational results

Statistics relating to Indigenous education levels have been detailed in Section (2.8).

### **7.2.1. Parenting effects**

Parents can play a decisive role in how well their children perform scholastically. Groome (1995:48) places great emphasis on the unintentional contribution that Indigenous parents play in the poor educational results of their children. He notes that many Indigenous parents use distinctive patterns of child rearing to develop in children desired values and behaviors. "Compared with Anglo-Australian parents, they tend to intervene less in the lives of their children, they treat them more as equals, allowing them relatively high levels of freedom and independence. Through this freedom, the children develop high levels of self reliance and independence". This approach to child rearing has significant implications for Indigenous students in the classroom. Most classrooms work on an imposed external discipline; the independence of many Indigenous children makes it difficult for the to adjust to such an environment.

Daylight and Johnstone (1986:62) argue that many Indigenous parents find their relationship with school is an extension of their general feeling of powerlessness in dealing with non-Indigenous society. They may find it difficult to insist on their children attending school, or supporting them in a system which they find threatening. However, according to McInerney (1989:117) and McDonald (1982:59), the majority of Indigenous parents see education as important, recognising it as the "means by which their children can become successful in the wider society." They regard the goals of schooling as being to maximize employment prospects in order to boost quality of life; to develop social skills for survival in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous worlds; and to develop self-esteem in children.

The House of Representatives Select Committee on Aboriginal Education (1985:35) states that "an important reason for the failure of the educational system to address itself to Indigenous needs has been the lack of significant involvement, until recent years, of Indigenous people in defining their needs." In Groome (1994:77) and McDonald (1982:102), Indigenous parents identify a number of factors which they believe contribute to the failure of their children to achieve at school including: "racist attitudes amongst students and staff, lack of Indigenous culture and language courses, the quality of educator-student relationships, lack of basic skills, and different values to those in the home." They also proposed that "lack of parental encouragement", and a "disturbed home life" contributed to the problem.

Gale (1972:28) believes that family mobility, which results in children changing schools frequently, is a major factor in the lack of academic progress by Indigenous students. Watts (1976:44) considers absenteeism a contributing factor to poor academic performance. Watts found that Indigenous parents, for a variety of reasons, could be tolerant of absenteeism. "Often they fail to realise the impact which this has on their children's learning and socialisation. They may need the student at home to care for younger siblings."

### 7.2.2. Lack of educator knowledge/understanding

“If I had to reduce all of educational psychology to just one principle, I would say this: the most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows. Ascertain this and teach him accordingly” (Ausubel, 1968:217). It appears that many educators have either never had the opportunity or have chose not to gain an understanding of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous students in particular. This is reflected in the following quote:

“Educators often organise their classroom, the seating arrangements of students or the composition of classroom groups in ways which ignore social avoidance rules and preferred Indigenous age and sex roles. They may accuse students of cheating when they are actually cooperating with each other in ways praised in Indigenous society. Such educator behaviour carries the message to the students that Indigenous rules are not important and can be broken without harmful consequences” (Harris, 1990:8).

Educational material relating to Indigenous issues can be organised into three categories, correlating to traditional, transitional (colonial) and contemporary Indigenous society. Untrained educators tend to concentrate on the traditional material because it is removed from “reality”, because it is uncontroversial and because it is exotic. In contrast, the transitional and contemporary material is glossed over because it is difficult to teach without controversy, and because there is a risk of engendering bitterness in Indigenous students and/or guilt in non-Indigenous students (Darling Downs Region Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Department, 1992:18).

Educational strategies can implicitly reinforce certain values and attitudes which, in the end, work to serve the interests of particular groups. The result of bias in educational strategies can be such that even though many institutions feature strong access and equity policies, certain groups may be disadvantaged if the delivery of formal education does not take sufficiently into account the legitimacy of a variety of learning styles (Watts, 1976:68).



Similarly, Giroux (1981:81) argues that education is significantly underpinned by an academic discourse which is biased toward values which support a western industrial and materialistic viewpoint.

### 7.2.3. Racism

Racism deflects Indigenous students from entering fully into the life of the institution. It works powerfully with shame to make Indigenous students highly self conscious and vulnerable to lowered self esteem and identity. They can easily become marginalised into a stereotype of a non-successful, disruptive student. Many decide to leave at this point, even though they may be below the age of compulsion. They leave having learnt to see themselves as failures (Groome, 1995:76). Furthermore, Lippmann (1981:145) identifies teachers as the main perpetrators of educational racism. This racism can take the form of either an active prejudice, or a passive one which regards Indigenous students as a problem group. For instance, Ngarritjan Kessariss noted that “not once during my 12 years of formal schooling did any of my teachers or anyone else in the school system, affirm my Aboriginality. Instead I grew up feeling ashamed of my Indigenous heritage and I felt pressured to stress that I was only part Aborigine” (Groome, 1995:70).

These influences readily translate into self-defeating behaviour for Indigenous students. Groome (1995:78) notes that when educators fail to take a strong line on prejudice, racial harassment of Indigenous students can become accepted as part of a school culture. The basis of racism in educational institutions is frequently community pressures on the institution to conform to local values (Kalantzis, 1985:7).

### 7.2.4. Peer pressure

The influence exerted by peers can have a considerable effect on Indigenous educational performance. Indigenous children, especially in remote communities, are skilled at using

shame to control peers. Students who are high achievers or who are seen to be too keen, may be shamed into silence and withdrawal (Groome, 1995:73). Alternatively, peer pressure may persuade students to leave school. Indigenous students who continue on at school frequently run the gauntlet of peers who have dropped out. Their continued attendance is mocked and their Aboriginality is questioned. If a student wants to succeed in school, they may feel the need to forfeit their acceptance by their Indigenous peer group. Few are able to withstand the effects of such peer pressure (Groome, 1995:65). Another effect of peer pressure can be the formation of resistance groups. To members of such groups, making it in school is a form of failure. In order to maintain their identity and status within the group, these students must reject the behaviours that would make them successful in school (Woolfolk, 1995:163).

#### 7.2.5. Low socio-economic status

It can be argued that a sense of choice, control, and self-determination is critical if people are to feel intrinsically motivated. When people come to believe that the events and outcomes in their lives are mostly uncontrollable, they have developed learned helplessness. Low socio-economic status children, raised in environments where choice and control are financially constrained, may become victims of learned helplessness; destined for scholastic underachievement (Woolfolk, 1995:148). Low socio-economic effects also bring more immediate problems. Many Indigenous parents have difficulty in finding money for school clothing, school materials, lunches or transport (Choo, 1990:11).

#### 7.2.6. Traditional learning styles

While traditional learning styles can barely be called an impediment, they do create problems for Indigenous students trying to excel in schools characterised by 'Western values'. While cognitive styles and learning preferences are not related to intelligence or effort, they do affect school performance (Woolcock, 1995:147).

Since the late 1970s a great deal has been written about differences in students' learning-style preferences (Dunn and Dunn, 1992:37 ; Lippmann, 1981:109). This research has enabled some generalisations to be made about traditional learning strategies of Indigenous students:

- A tendency to learn through observation and imitation rather than through reading, writing or verbal explanation.
- A need to be actively involved in the learning process. Personal trial and error is more important than verbal instruction and demonstration by the educator.
- A preference for learning in a real-life setting, rather than the contrived one of the classroom.
- A learning style characterised by mastery of context-specific skills rather than context-free principles.
- An orientation towards people rather than information. The relationship with the educator is therefore often more prized than the information itself.

The kinds of Western thought processes which are central to the scientific outlook, and which allow a great deal of control over the physical world through science and technology are distinctly non-Indigenous. These non-Indigenous thinking styles mostly involve imagined situations of no personal or immediate relevance to the student and include: extensive verbal comparing and contrasting, generalising, hypothesising unrelated to a practical task, and the objective evaluation of other people and their cultural beliefs. In contrast, the Indigenous orientation is towards people rather than knowledge, and towards a respect for older people as the legitimate carriers of knowledge (Harris, 1990:6). Other differences include an Indigenous emphasis on informal structures, the involvement of relatives in the teaching process, and a focus on learning by implication (Darling Downs Region Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Department, 1992:70).

### 7.2.7. Role of the educator

Cross-cultural teaching can help build understanding and respect for Indigenous people. This can occur, for example, simply by taking students into environments culturally important to Indigenous people. If educators are accepting of Indigenous people and learn as much as possible about their values, needs and issues, then this benefits the educators themselves, and both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students (Ebbeck, 1994:113). However cross-cultural teaching is not straightforward; it is as much a specialist field as teaching the deaf or the gifted. The House of Representatives Select Committee on Aboriginal Education (1985:191) stated that substantial specialist training, followed by experience in Indigenous schools, should be introduced as standard practice for Indigenous educators.

Educators can do a great deal to build up a sense of achievement and self-respect in Indigenous students, and once this is achieved the response of the student can show remarkable improvement (The New South Wales Teachers Federation, 1970:6). One means of doing this is to highlight continued cultural differences, achievements and developments, rather than focussing on negative socio-economic indices. If educators take this approach, Indigenous students may find it easier to realistically assess and accept existing strengths (as well as problems) without becoming overwhelmed by notions of cultural loss. It is obvious, but important, to note that if basic education fails then any “National Initiatives” and “National Strategies” are greatly handicapped from the start.

### 7.3. *Training programs*

Training programs, in general, are undertaken after any primary or secondary schooling has been completed, and are often focussed on vocational outcomes. There are numerous training programs relating to tourism and business skills in Australia. However, very few are tailored to the special needs of Indigenous people, and those that are often inappropriate. This may be one of the reasons that many Indigenous training programs fail to generate

significant attendance or positive outcomes (ATSIC et al., 1993:24). A large proportion of tourism training is provided “on the job” by employers. This form of training is often seen to be more productive and beneficial than the classroom approach. However, its effectiveness can be greatly influenced by the quality of the trainers (NTTITC, 1991: 56). In such cases, it would be very beneficial for the trainers involved to have some exposure to material relating to the training of Indigenous people.

#### **7.4. Training needs**

##### **7.4.1. Preservation of traditional skills**

Maintenance of traditional skills is fundamental to the sustainability of Indigenous tourism. Thus there exists a need for training in relation to the preservation of these skills. While there is some support currently available through ATSIC programs, the Northern Territory Tourism Industry Training Council believes that greater financial support should be provided for the determination and preservation of traditional skills (NTTITC, 1991:32).

##### **7.4.2. Language skills**

Increased Indigenous participation in tourism requires enhanced English literacy and numeracy skills. English numeracy in particular is often a major barrier to Indigenous involvement. More bi-lingual and bi-cultural education are possible solutions.

There are major tourism opportunities in the transfer of Indigenous knowledge and skills to tourists. There is thus a need for training in cross cultural communication skills. This is difficult as it involves communicating ideas across both language and cultural barriers. Issues such as taboo subjects and the perceived impoliteness of some questioning pose problems.

Nevertheless, successful communication can make for both an enjoyable tourism experience and enhance the appreciation of Indigenous culture amongst visitors.

#### 7.4.3. Career Education

Tourism jobs are often perceived to be low skill and temporary in nature, by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike. Furthermore, involvement in the “leisure” industry is often misconstrued as involving high levels of leisure for the workers as well. Thus there is a need for greater dissemination of the genuine career opportunities offered by the tourism industry. A positive career example is provided by Finlayson (1991:59). “The prospects of becoming a Tjapukai dancer is an esteemed vocation for many Aboriginal boys in Kuranda. The dancers are men whose success is public; these men travel, they own their own transport, they earn a regular wage, and they have a prestigious social profile. What Tjapukai offers to male Aboriginal youth is an alternative to long-term unemployment, away from constant, demoralising encounters with the hotel and the police, and a forum for self expression, especially in a town with an Aboriginal unemployment rate of 98%. The advent of Tjapukai theatre has been a boon to the Aboriginal population in particular, but the wider community has also benefited from the increased tourist trade.

There is an immediate need for training concerning tourism itself. As the number of Indigenous tourism enterprises has grown, there has been an increased interest amongst Indigenous people about finding more about tourism and how to become involved. Such training could minimise cases where there are Indigenous tourism opportunities but they are not realised as individuals or communities have no idea where to start. The Australian Government has recognised the importance of this area. For instance, it has produced material such as “On our own terms” and “The business of Indigenous tourism” which are kits (comprised of videos, audio cassettes, booklets and posters) specifically aimed at providing an introduction to tourism for Indigenous people (ATSIC and NCSTT, 1994 ; ATSIC, 1996). Unfortunately, potential negative impacts are dealt with only superficially in both cases.

#### 7.4.4. Business training for Indigenous participants

There are some employment areas, such as Indigenous cultural tours and cultural centres, where it would be expected that Indigenous people should predominate. However even in these areas, there is a very low number of Indigenous people in managerial and administrative positions. This is despite the fact that there has been a steady increase in the number of Indigenous-owned tourism enterprises. Most such enterprises remain under direct or indirect non-Indigenous control. Furthermore, some Indigenous owners do not exercise strong control over the activities of non-Indigenous managers. This limits their ability to gain an understanding of the industry and management experience. Without representation at senior levels, Indigenous participation rates will continue to be low as, as the business concerned will is unlikely to have any significant Indigenous input at a decision making level (ATSIC, 1994:284).

#### 7.4.5. Management training

There are some employment areas, such as Indigenous cultural tours and cultural centres, where it would be expected that Indigenous people should predominate. However even in these areas, there is a very low number of Indigenous people in managerial and administrative positions. This is despite the fact that there has been a steady increase in the number of Indigenous-owned tourism enterprises. Most such enterprises remain under direct or indirect non-Indigenous control. Furthermore, some Indigenous owners do not exercise strong control over the activities of non-Indigenous managers. This limits their ability to gain an understanding of the industry and management experience. Without representation at senior levels, Indigenous participation rates will continue to be low as, as the business concerned will is unlikely to have any significant Indigenous input at a decision making level (ATSIC, 1994:284).

#### 7.4.6. Training of the mainstream tourism industry

In the same way that there is a need for training of Indigenous people, so there is a need for the tourism industry to be educated about the potential and practicalities of Indigenous tourism. Increased awareness of Indigenous social, cultural and lifestyle requirements would improve the non-Indigenous/Indigenous interaction and the tourism enterprises that arise from the interaction. When non-Indigenous people are interpreting Indigenous culture for tourists, there is a need for training to ensure that they are imparting correct information and in the proper manner. Failure to do so risks alienating and offending Indigenous stakeholders. Misinforming or embellished narratives have been a grievance for Indigenous people for quite some time (NTTITC, 1991:59).

#### 7.4.7. Training priorities

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Deaths in Custody recommended that spending on training and other active labour market policy programs be given preference over spending on unemployment relief programs. The determination of priorities for particular training programs must, according to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, be better attuned to the particular needs expressed by Indigenous people in their regional community plans, and the skill requirements of the local labour market (ATSIC, 1997:146). Despite this, training programs set up specifically for Indigenous people and tourism are rare.



## **7.5. Specific Indigenous considerations**

### **7.5.1. Indigenous cultural requirements**

Many factors relating to the willingness and ability of Indigenous people to access tourism training are common to other Australians. However there are a number of Indigenous-specific issues which need to be addressed. One immediate issue is that traditional Indigenous society does not involve any equivalent to tourism. Another issue is that many Indigenous people have negative associations with tourism. This reflects some past and present experiences of tourism where passive Indigenous involvement was considered to be of an exploitative nature. Insensitive and offensive tourist behaviour also causes disillusionment with the tourism industry.

### **7.5.2. Community consultation**

The enormous diversity of Indigenous communities means that training should, where possible, be tailored to the particular community in question. Differences amongst communities can include such variables as perceptions of tourism, motivation for participation, skill levels of members, clan and kinship structure etc. The following quote illustrates the effect some of these variables can have on the likely success of a venture.

“Milikapiti is unusual in that it is made up of just one clan group. Whilst drinking does prove a problem, particularly amongst the men, fighting is relatively rare. Further, regarding decision-making and stability, Milikapiti has an easier lot than many other communities where up to 12 clan groups (sometimes traditionally opposing) must reach consensus over any development proposal. With community initiative, one could anticipate that Milikapiti - with its clan group status - would be likely to demonstrate maintained commitment to their chosen enterprise; provided that it was run on the terms of the community. The smaller the land involved, or the fewer traditional owners, the more success can be expected in

negotiation for a new project. Similar results could be expected with tourism training, provided that it was designed through consultation, to suit Milikapiti imperatives” (NTTITC, 1991: 91).

### 7.5.3. Community-based training

Many Indigenous people withdraw from training courses, often for family or financial reasons. When Indigenous people were asked what changes to existing training opportunities would result in greater participation, the first response was almost universally concerned with locally based training. Homesickness was everywhere a profound problem for those who had tried to travel and live elsewhere for the sake of training (ATSIC, 1994: 294). If drop out rates are reduced then the cost per successful student is proportionately reduced. An obvious way to reduce drop out rates would be to provide *in situ* training. This could be done by a variety of means including correspondence courses, development of community-based specialist trainers and training facilities, better use of modern data communications technologies, and the development of self-paced audio and/or visual training resources.

### 7.5.4. Gender issues

According to Finlayson (1991:116), it is often unrecognised that gender differences play an influential role in Indigenous education and training programs. For instance, traditional Indigenous rules concerning male/female contact may make it impossible for both to be in one room at the same time. Thus training venues for Indigenous people must allow for customs regarding gender interaction as well as for kinship rules. The impact, of women training and working, on traditional authority systems is another issue. The new financial status they have when working can undermine the traditional status of men in Indigenous society. In some cases, men have actively subverted the woman’s possibilities for continued employment. Finally, access to child care is a particularly important factor. Most child care

facilities are geared towards urban-based women with access to private transport. These characteristics have excluded some Indigenous women from greater involvement in education and training.

### **7.6. Summary**

A number of points can be made from this brief exploration of Indigenous education and training. There is an obvious need for tailoring of Indigenous teaching programs to mesh with the social, cultural, economic and geographical characteristics of Australia's Indigenous communities. Some important factors for consideration include the diversity of Indigenous cultures, variations in learning styles, the need for education of teachers and trainers, and the pervasive effects of racism. As with most Indigenous issues, it is not really possible to consider education and training in isolation. Thus factors such as low socio-economic status, poor health and geographical isolation are all important Indigenous characteristics that impinge on education and training. Conversely, improvements in education and training could be expected to bring spillover benefits to these and other Indigenous problems. In terms of the tourism industry, there is a need for training to make Indigenous communities aware of the positive possibilities involved with the industry. Similarly, it is equally important to provide Indigenous communities with the full range of potential barriers and negative impacts involved with tourism. There is an apparent need for business and management training for Indigenous individuals and communities. Such training could reduce the reliance on non-Indigenous staff at senior levels in Indigenous enterprises. Ultimately, much of the success of tourism-related vocational training will depend on a foundation of suitable basic education. Finally, it should be noted that the tourism industry itself needs an increased awareness about the possibilities involved with Indigenous tourism, and also how to work in a harmonious and productive way with Indigenous communities.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

It is apparent that tourism is not a universal panacea for the problems faced by Australia's Indigenous communities. While involvement has proved positive for some communities, for others it merely created new problems. These differences in outcomes are not surprising given the diversity of communities and circumstances involved. Thus it is important that simplistic "one size fits all" solutions are not proffered by the Government and the tourism industry. Instead, strategies should be developed on an individual community basis. Furthermore, as the major stakeholders, the communities involved should have greater participation in the decision making processes.

For such increased participation to be meaningful, it is important that the communities involved are fully informed about the potential changes associated with a particular venture. To this end, it is imperative that a more balanced and comprehensive picture of the effects of tourism is provided to Indigenous communities by Government and the tourism industry. Informed communities that decide not to become involved in tourism should not be penalised for their decision.

While self-determination is desirable, in some cases joint ventures may provide a more practical means to initial involvement in the tourism industry. Ultimately, the skills and knowledge obtained from such ventures could be used to initiate Indigenous ventures.

The recent promotion of Indigenous tourism by the Australian Government raises the issue of the motivations behind this push. While it seems clear that part of the motivation is a genuine desire to increase Indigenous self-determination and living conditions, it is equally clear that there tourist dollars are a major consideration. It could be argued that rectifying Australia's poor race relation image and ensuring a smooth lead up to the 2000 Olympics are also considerations.

In all of this discussion, it should be remembered that physical and cultural environments have intrinsic values which outweigh their value as tourism assets. Unless sustainability is pursued, tourism is in danger of being a self-destructive process, destroying the very resources on which it is based. Thus there will be small-scale, isolated examples of “success” but these will just be micro solutions to a macro problem.

Finally, it is imperative that Indigenous Australians have access to quality education and training. This involves ensuring that they have a solid basic education which is tailored to their particular needs. If such customization is not developed then the education provided will continue to be ineffective. Such a foundation would allow for effective further education and training, which again should be tailored to Indigenous needs. This is essential if Indigenous Australians are to make maximum benefit from the opportunities offered by tourism, while concurrently overcoming the constraints involved and minimising real and potential negative impacts.

## 9. APPENDIX

The following is the letter sent to over 30 organisations as part of my information gathering.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Presently I am about to embark on a half thesis research Report to go towards a Masters in Development Studies at Massey University, New Zealand. While I have not decided on a definite topic title it will be something similar to the following:

### **Indigenous Tourism Ventures - A development tool for the Indigenous Australians?**

I am trying to establish whether self-management and control of tourism ventures is a useful and acceptable avenue to increase autonomy and self-determination for Indigenous people.

Will it create desired employment opportunities?

Will it increase the chances of preserving the culture including arts and crafts?

Will the negative impacts of tourism on Indigenous cultures outweigh the positive ones?

Is the injection of Government funds into encouraging and supporting tourism enterprises a possible alternative to current funding initiatives?

What I would really appreciate from your organisation is any of the following:

- any information at all you may have that could be relevant (including general Indigenous background).
- any alternative topics you think need researching.
- any addresses or contacts you know of which could be helpful.

I realise I have burdened you with a lot of demands, and acknowledge your time is valuable. However any help you could offer would be highly appreciated. Thanks,

Yours sincerely,

Leysha Penfold

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