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Public sector initiatives for Aboriginal small business development in tourism

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Public Sector Initiatives for Aboriginal Small Business Development in Tourism

Occasional Paper Number 6

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crc TOURISM

Public Sector Initiatives for Aboriginal Small Business Development in Tourism

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Foreword

Interest in Indigenous tourism is being encouraged by a strong consumer demand for natural and cultural attractions and a global upsurge of interest in the values, knowledge and traditions of Indigenous cultures.

Tourism is one of a few industries that has been identified as having the potential to generate employment and economic development opportunities for Indigenous communities in the areas where they live. In order to benefit from tourism Indigenous people must have access to information and knowledge that will enable them to successfully engage in the tourism industry.

The framework for Indigenous tourism is extremely complex and Indigenous people are sometimes bewildered at the various levels of bureaucracy and programs offered through the many government agencies.

The Occasional Paper on Indigenous Tourism assistance packages will be of immense value to the Indigenous community in helping to access programs which can be of assistance in the development and operations of tourism businesses.

Whilst there appears to be an upsurge of interest in Indigenous tourism, to date there has been only limited research undertaken to assist Indigenous people in building a sustainable tourism business. Aboriginal Tourism Australia strongly supports the need for a research framework to set the directions and identify actions required to turn the potential of Indigenous tourism into reality.

Currently there is a lack of clear information on what experiences are sought and in which locations. In order to exploit the demand, we need research that will assist in developing strategies to enhance the potential role of tourism in Indigenous communities and in determining the feasibility and the sustainability of the business of Indigenous tourism in Australia. The identification of customer perceptions, needs and expectations of Indigenous tourism product in both the international and domestic markets and in wholesale markets are considered a key priority.

The opportunity to experience aspects of the 40,000 years of history and culture of Australia's Aboriginal peoples, is a unique point of difference offered to both domestic and international visitors. We need research on the domestic market which will inform the industry of the potential for Indigenous cultural tourism to Australians. We also need research to

identify the competitiveness of Australian Indigenous cultural tourism experiences against world wide Indigenous cultural tourism

The development of the Indigenous Research Program by the CRC for Sustainable Tourism at Southern Cross University provides for the direct participation of Indigenous people in research that affects them. The involvement of Indigenous people in research will lead to a greater understanding by communities of current needs and future trends.

Lois Peeler

Chairperson

Aboriginal Tourism Australia

This Paper focuses on initiatives aimed at Indigenous tourism enterprises and emanating from public sector agencies across Australia. It is recognised that other initiatives are available from private sector agencies and educational institutions. A section on Tourism Training Australia is included in the paper. The peak industry association for Indigenous Tourism is Aboriginal Tourism Australia (ATA). ATA has implemented a number of initiatives to support Indigenous tourism businesses. They include:

A Financial Management Guide for Indigenous Tourism Businesses;

An Aboriginal Tourism Marketing Association in Victoria which may serve as a national model for cooperative marketing around Indigenous tourism enterprises; and

'Respecting Our Culture', a national accreditation programme for Indigenous tourism businesses.

ATA also represents Indigenous tourism interests nationally, and convenes workshops for operators and managers. More information about ATA initiatives and services can be found at:

www.aboriginaltourism.com.au

Aboriginal Tourism Australia

Introduction

Indigenous Australians are disadvantaged when it comes to employment opportunities (Norris 2001). This situation has not improved despite many years of specific programs designed to address this issue (Taylor & Altman 1997, Norris 2001). While the most successful attempt to increase Indigenous employment appears to have been through the use of Community Development Employment Programs [CDEP], the predominance of the philosophy of fitting Indigenous people into non-Indigenous approaches to the problem remains (Norris 2001). The current perspective applied by Governments at both a State and Federal level sees tourism, especially in regional communities, but also in urban areas, as a potential panacea for many Indigenous communities.

Aboriginal Tourism Australia [ATA] has identified the development of entrepreneurship and capacity building amongst Indigenous tourism businesses and the Indigenous workforce in the tourism industry as a key area of concern. In addition, access to start up and developmental capital is also very important to the sustainability of Indigenous tourism ventures (Finalyson and Madden, 1995). Therefore, the capacity to implement organisational objectives and the capacity to source funds for product development has formed the basis of this enquiry (Fiszbein 1997).

Our inquiry is not an examination of the effectiveness of the programs discussed, and makes no comment regarding the results they produce or the processes they contain. Rather, we are examining the current (as of March, 2002) range of public sector initiatives for assisting in the development of Indigenous tourism products to determine if there are gaps in the provision of services in the process.

A number of public sector initiatives have been developed that are intended to stimulate Indigenous participation in tourism, not only through funding for product development, but through: promotion initiatives; infrastructure development; training and skills development; and coordination of public sector resources. This paper concentrates on funding and other assistance packages provided by the Federal and State governments that are available to Indigenous groups and individuals interested in establishing or expanding a tourism enterprise. It should be noted that our analysis did find several private organisations involved in this area, but our research focussed only on public sector programs. In particular, the preface to this paper has described the work of Aboriginal Tourism Australia and its partners. Organisations such as ATA have attempted to fill some of the gaps identified in this research. It is hoped that the research will assist ATA as

well as other public and private sector service providers to work together in developing sustainable Indigenous participation programs for the tourism industries.

Public Policy and Practice for Indigenous Tourism Product

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Industry Strategy [NATSITIS](1997) was developed in response to the perceived potential for tourism to generate economic benefits for Indigenous people. Tourism is a complicated and varied set of industries (Leiper 1995) that could offer a number of options for participation by Indigenous people. However, for this participation to be successful Government organisations need to play an important role in building Indigenous capacity to participate in the tourism industries (NATSITIS, 1997).

A number of public and private sector initiatives have been developed to stimulate Indigenous participation in tourism. Boyle's (2001) analysis of these initiatives suggests that little is known either about the structure or the intentions of these initiatives, and the utility of these initiatives from the perspective of their suppliers and consumers (i.e. Indigenous operators).

The information contained in this paper was collected up until the end of March 2002. The authors recognise the dynamic nature of policy implementation, and changes in specific programs and initiatives have occurred since the research was conducted. This paper provides a useful checklist for ensuring that such change addresses the shortcomings of past initiatives.

Methodology

Discussions with ATA revealed that several cultural implications made standard approaches to business development problematic to put into practice when Indigenous participants were involved. Out of these discussions the Aboriginal Tourism Enterprise Management Potential Tasklist [ATEMPT] was created. This approach acknowledges the cultural, experiential and goal differentiation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants in business development.

Created by Carson & Waller (Centre for Regional Tourism Research) in conjunction with Lois Peeler and Leanne Miller (Aboriginal Tourism Australia).

This framework was used as the basis for creating the criteria for assessing the availability of appropriate support through the public sector initiatives available for Indigenous tourism development. It is recognised that ATEMPT is only one of a number of possible evaluation frameworks. Further research is required to validate the ATEMPT management approach.

Each of the public sector initiatives discovered was contacted for information regarding how a prospective Indigenous tourism enterprise could access the programs. Based on the information received on the phone, from received pamphlet literature and online sources, the initiative was assessed in terms of its ability to deliver outcomes within the ATEMPT framework. Programs have been identified as emerging from public sectors at a Federal level, as well as for each State and the Northern Territory.

Method

Analysing programs at each level allowed us to assess where the blockages in the provision of services may have been occurring and what might have been missing in the process for developing Indigenous tourism products. It also allowed us to comment on the apparent level of coordination between programs from different levels of Government. The initiatives will all be addressed on the following points as generated from the ATEMPT framework:

Assessment Question	Vision	Environment	Opportunity	Capacity	Feasibility	Management	Monitoring
1. Is funding available?…	…to develop idea.	…to evaluate existing environment resource assessment.	…to test market potential.	…to conduct skills/ resource audit.	…to develop business plan.	…to bring concept to market readiness.	…to ensure sustainability.
2. Is there access to examples of success stories?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Is there access to examples of failures?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. Is direct (face to face) consultation possible?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. Are projects funded on completion or at specific milestones?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6. Is the funding a grant or loan?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7. Does the funding require matching or in-kind contributions?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8. Is the funding paid to the enterprise or a third-party service provider?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9. Who decides how the funds are used?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10. Are cultural differences specifically accounted for?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 1: Assessment questions for each component of the ATEMPT Framework

The assessment and scoring process

Individual initiatives were described and scored against each of the assessment questions in each aspect of ATEMPT. Table 2 describes the scoring system.

Assessment Question	**0 points**	**0.5 points**	**1 point**
1. Is funding available?…	Not possible	Possible	Clearly demonstrable
2. Is there access to examples of success stories?	Not possible	Possible	Clearly demonstrable
3. Is there access to examples of failures?	Not possible	Possible	Clearly demonstrable
4. Is direct (face to face) consultation possible?	Not possible	Possible	Clearly demonstrable
5. Are projects funded on completion or at specific milestones?	Not possible	Possible	Clearly demonstrable
6. Is the funding a grant or loan?	No funding available	Loan only	Grants/ flexible
7. Does the funding require matching or in-kind contributions?	Matching cash only	Cash and in-kind	Flexible
8. Is the funding paid to the enterprise or a third-party service provider?	No funding	Service provider only	Flexible
9. Who decides how the funds are used?	Funding body only	Joint decision	Community/ enterprise
10. Are cultural differences specifically accounted for?	Not indicated	Implied	Clearly stated

Table 2: Scoring system for the ATEMPT assessment question

An Analysis of Federal Initiatives

Our research has revealed that at the federal level there are 10 initiatives available to Indigenous people. There is also one initiative being developed by Centrelink, however the details of this program were unclear and it was not considered in our analysis. ATSIC provide seven programs, one of which is in partnership with the Department of Employment Workplace Relations and Small Business (DEWRSB). The Commonwealth Department of Tourism and Tourism Training Australia provide the remaining programs.

F1 Indigenous Small Business Fund

The *Indigenous Small Business Fund (ISBF)* was developed by ATSIC in partnership with DEWRSB. The fund was announced in the 1999-2000 Budget as part of the *Indigenous Employment Programme* and was expected to complement the *Indigenous Business Development Programs*. The *ISBF* was set up under the Indigenous Employment Policy with the objectives of fostering the development of businesses owned and operated by Indigenous people and to promote Indigenous employment opportunities.

The *ISBF* will fund Indigenous organisations that provide services to other Indigenous people or groups in order to foster Indigenous businesses through the development of business skills. Funding is available to:

- identify and facilitate business opportunities;
- help Indigenous people start businesses;
- provide advice or support service to small business owner/operators in developing skills, markets and networks.

Indigenous organisations may receive funding to:

- provide entrepreneurship and business facilitation training;
- identify possible business opportunities, including undertaking feasibility studies at the local level or more broadly;
- clarify business opportunities and developing business plans and proposals; and

- provide advice or support services to small business owner/operators in developing their skills, markets and networks.

Funding for Indigenous organisations is available in the range of $5,000 to $100,000 for business development projects. Funding is generally available for up to 12 months and a contribution to the cost of the project is expected from the applicant, in particular where requested funding exceeds $30,000.

Advice on eligibility is available at the State offices of DEWRSB and Regional and State offices of ATSIC or via the local Area Consultative Committee (ACC)[1]. The endorsement of the ACC is not required in making an application.

The *ISBF* also provides assistance to individual Indigenous people seeking to establish or expand their own small business (funding handled by ATSIC). Individual Indigenous Australians can apply for assistance to develop their ideas, where these are assessed as having good business potential. The *ISBF* will help applicants develop business plans and access business capital and support services through ATSIC.

The *ISBF* does not provide direct finance to individuals, but will commit finance for a service provider to help the applicant with an idea by providing business training for up to one year. A business plan is written for the applicant by the provider once the initial application form (attainable from the information brochure or downloadable form the website) has been approved by ATSIC head office in Canberra. The business plan can then be used in applying for further funding for other sources such as from ATSIC under the *Indigenous Business Development Program*.

Organisations and individuals needing business finance and venture capital will need to approach commercial lending agencies or ATSIC for possible assistance. For example, financial assistance for organisations can be obtained from DEWSRB.

Despite this program being promoted regionally in workshops with Indigenous networks and contractors around Australia, ATSIC have received very few applications. The *Indigenous Business Development Program*, which is provided for organisations and individuals, is more popular.

[1] ACCs are a regional network working in partnership with government, business and the community.

F2 Business Development Program (BDP)

The *Business Development Program (BDP)*[2] offers an alternative to mainstream financial institutions and is more popular than the *ISBF*. The aim of the *BDP* is to promote Indigenous economic development by enabling Indigenous people and communities to acquire or develop commercially viable enterprises. Proposals that do not clearly demonstrate commercial viability will not be considered for assistance from this program. Unlike the *ISBF*, which will only commit funding to a service provider for the provision of business training and writing of business plans, the *BDP* will provide financial assistance to cover the costs of business materials and equipment.

The *BDP* tailors assistance to the needs of individual businesses, and provides two basic types of services:

- business finance, and
- business support.

Business finance is available as loans, grants, guarantees or a combination of these. Interest charged on loans is linked to the lowest commercial bank business rate. Interest concessions, interest-free loans and grants are also available where a project needs assistance to be commercially viable and will produce sufficient benefits to Indigenous people.

Business support may include: professional assistance to develop and present a business plan and application; business or management training; or ongoing access to professional assistance.

Average annual funding provided by the *IBDF* is around $36 million. There is a considerable demand for loans and grants that existing funding cannot satisfy.

F3 Tourism Our Way Brochure

ATSIC also provides the Tourism Our Way Brochure, Business Self Assessment and Information Kit, the Business of Indigenous Tourism Booklet and On Our Own Terms Booklet. Tourism Our Way is a guide/brochure containing free 'help yourself' information for autonomous self-referral. The aim is enable Indigenous managers and employees to develop skills in achieving Best Practice in Tourism. The brochure includes:

[2] The Business Development Program combines the former Business Funding Scheme (which mostly offered loans) with the Indigenous Business Incentive Program (which offered grants and training).

- telephone listings of State and Regional ATSIC offices
- Tourism data sources, such as ABS and Industry groups (the majority of which are located in metropolitan areas);
- State Tourism Commissions (for marketing purposes);
- Training and employment agencies/organisations;
- Department of Aboriginal Affairs; Industry Policy Departments;
- Commonwealth Finance Banks, state by state, and small business advice (for metropolitan areas in selected states only) to contact for further information.

F4 Business Self Assessment and Information Kit

The *Business Self Assessment and Information Kit*, with catch phrase *'Good Business? Or Just a Good Idea?'* is offered by ATSIC as a self start-up kit that assists in evaluating the business idea and helps individuals determine if they are prepared to start up a business. The kit provides an insight into the viability of the business concept and also provides further directions and contacts. The kit also enables proponents to determine the funds required up-front to begin the business and how to apply for funding, if required.

F5 The Business of Indigenous Tourism Booklet

Prepared by ATSIC and the National Centre for Studies in Travel and Tourism, the *Business of Indigenous Tourism Booklet,* is similar to the *Business Self-Assessment and Information Kit*. The *Business of Indigenous Tourism Booklet* includes an audio tape that explains how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders interested in tourism can start a tourism business, or begin a career in the tourism industry. It is part of the implementation of the Recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, which suggest ways of advancing self-determination for Indigenous peoples in Australia. One of the initiatives is an examination of whether Indigenous peoples can take a more active part in the tourism industry and, if so, how this might be supported by government.

F6 On Our Own Terms

On Our Own Terms is a booklet and video package that highlights some of the success stories in Indigenous tourism across Australia and explains the reasons behind their success. In addition, problems and important issues that need to be considered by an Indigenous community or individuals thinking of starting a tourism venture are also covered. The issues covered include

the need for community consultation, business planning and market research.

F7 Community Development Employment Projects

CDEP, a community and participant led initiative, is a job creation program that provides opportunities for Indigenous employment and skills development. ATSIC fund Indigenous community organisations to run *CDEPs* in urban, rural, and remote communities via a funding application process. Examples of programs include: the provision of housing; municipal services; road maintenance and development; artifact production; and enterprise development.

Community organisations responsible for managing projects receive funding to pay the wages of participants and also to cover the costs of administration and capital items required for undertaking the project.

F8 New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS)

The *New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS)* is available to all Australians. The difference between *NEIS* and the *ISBF*, is that applicants of *NEIS* are provided financial assistance by Centrelink during the process of being trained by one of Centrelink's service providers while developing a business plan. Once the plan has been endorsed, NEIS will commit a grant equivalent to one year's unemployment benefits. During this time the recipient will be allowed other earnings. Under *NEIS*, no loans are offered by Centrelink for the provision of business equipment or materials.

F9 Nature Based and Indigenous Tourism Promotional Brochure

The initiative provided by the Commonwealth Department of Tourism is the *Nature Based and Indigenous Tourism Promotional Brochure.* This brochure showcases a range of established, successful Indigenous tourism businesses. The brochure does not provide any advice but offers case studies and criteria that made these businesses successful. Contacts for further details are also provided in the brochure.

F10 Pathways

The final national initiative, *Pathways*, is provided by Tourism Training Australia. Pathways is a guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples seeking training and certified qualifications in the tourism industry. Tourism Training Australia also provides (free of charge) a comprehensive 'Guide to the Tourism Training Package'. The guide has been developed by Tourism Training Australia with funding provided by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA). The guide provides self-education enabling people to meet industry competence

standards. The publication has been written for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in order to 'support their achievement of national qualifications in tourism' and covers the following areas: attractions and theme parks; meetings and events; tour operations and guiding; and visitor information services. The Guide also lists training resources, such as video-based resources and teacher manual available for purchase by anyone. The assessment principles have been endorsed by vocational education and training ministers and should be undertaken by, or auspiced through a registered training organisation or provider.

The training packages provided through *Pathways* allow up-skilling for service providers/NGOs or other networks in remote areas contracted by ATSIC to support applicants of the ATSIC *Indigenous Small Business Fund*. Trainer manuals are available for: food and beverage; room attendants; kitchen attendants; hospitality industry; interpersonal skills; housekeeping; hygiene; customer relations; restaurant operations and so on.

The Training Packages have two parts:

1. Endorsed Component containing a complete set of National Competency Standards, Assessment Guidelines and a National Qualifications Framework with requirements for achieving a qualification at each level.

2. Training Package Support Materials that may include trainer guides, trainee workbooks, professional development materials, supervisor and mentor guide and assessment materials.

The Guide contains comprehensive descriptors of competency standards and an outline of topics/units covered in each package support and instructions for use. The Guide also provides an overview. Suggestions, options and strategies for training and assessment are included with regard to considerations for trainee needs, resources, training and assessment venues and other possible strategies.

Various general resources, including video-based resources are also available. The Regional and Rural Tourism Modules include: Australian Indigenous Culture; Cultural Interpretation; Cultural Awareness Training Package; Employers Guide to Recruitment of Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islanders.

Other relevant material

- Strong Business, Strong Culture, Strong Country – video and workbook
- Australian Indigenous Culture Trainer Manual
- Australian Indigenous Culture – Cultural Interpretation Manual

Results of the analysis of the Federal Initiatives

The following table provides the raw scores for the 10 initiatives analysed.

Initiative	**Vision**	**Environment**	**Opportunity**	**Capacity**	**Feasibility**	**Management**	**Monitoring**	**Overall Score**
Indigenous Small Business Fund	6	7	5	6.5	7.5	7	3.5	*42.5*
Business Development Program	0	7	6.5	7	7	6.5	0	*34*
Tourism Our Way	2	2.5	1.5	1	1.5	2	1	*11.5*
Business Self Assessment Kit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*
Business of Indigenous Tourism	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*
On Our Own Terms	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	*6*
Community Development Employment Projects	0	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	0	*27.5*
New Enterprise Initiative Scheme	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	*7*
Nature Based and Indigenous Tourism	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	*9*
Pathways (Tourism Training Australia)	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	*3*

Table 3: Analysis of Federal Programs

We suggest the following guidelines be used to interpret the scores attained by each program evaluated. The maximum score is 70. While it would be wonderful for such a program to exist, it is doubtful that any program would be able to reach this position due to the reality of the specific nature of the objectives of their individual organisations. Therefore, the following score grades should be used as a guide for assessing the effective coverage of the ATEMPT framework.

Score	Guiding principle
0-20	Ineffective overall coverage or possible very good specific coverage of a single criteria
21-40	Minimal coverage or possibly very good coverage of several criteria
41-60	Reasonable coverage and possibly good coverage of several criteria
61-70	Exceptional coverage of most criteria

By consulting the raw scores included for each program it will be clear what the situation is.

These results indicate that only one initiative provides support for the visioning stage at the beginning of the product development process. This is not only a surprising result given the claims of many of the programs analysed, but given the importance of this stage to creating successful businesses, the lack of support could partly explain the problem with the longevity and lack of sustainability of many Indigenous tourism products.

However, the really interesting revelation is the lack of support for helping to sustain [monitor] Indigenous tourism products. All new businesses have difficulty in sustaining themselves from a myriad of reasons. However, Indigenous businesses will clearly have even greater pressures and barriers, both from external sources and from within, to succeed. Therefore, given the level of investment already in place to develop new products it seems almost wasteful to not continue the support beyond the initial stages of development. It is clear that the provision of networking and other associated marketing opportunities at this stage of the development of the business is available, but our research tends to indicate that these are not the only problems, nor the most significant, that Indigenous operators are likely to encounter.

An Analysis of State Initiatives

New South Wales

In NSW, in addition to *CDEP* there are six initiatives that are available to Indigenous individuals or groups. There does not seem to be financial support and public sector initiatives offering training programs for tourism ventures in NSW. These are offered through TAFE, the universities and private companies.

The tourism industry and state commissions appear to be offering extensive marketing exposure to successfully established Aboriginal tourism enterprises. Many case studies have been included that highlight factors for successful Aboriginal tourism businesses. However, tourism bodies appear to offer little in the way of funding, training and business plan development. Our experience in this research suggests that, if an Aboriginal person sought direction for development of a business concept, generally the Tourism Commission would direct the individual to ATSIC.

N1 Aboriginal Business Link Program (ABLP)

In NSW, the Department of State & Regional Development (DSRD) provides the *Aboriginal Business Link Program (ABLP)*. The ABLP program provides a subsidy towards the cost of a project that demonstrates a direct benefit to Aboriginal communities. The program aims to increase the number of Aboriginal businesses by supporting business owners and activities that are sustainable and profitable and lead to the development of skills, new markets and growth.

There are two streams of assistance - Link 1 and Link 2.

Link 1 provides networks for Indigenous businesses and enables Aboriginal business people to network by providing funding assistance to participate in mainstream trade shows and access to specific industry marketing and promotional opportunities.

Link 2 is designed to help Aboriginal business people build business networks, overcome regional isolation and develop business skills by linking them to DSRD programs and by supporting collective participation in trade shows and industry marketing through subsidised participation.

Programs include the Small Business Expansion Program, Women in Business Mentoring and Regional Business Development.

To be provided assistance under the program, businesses should be:

- Individual or groups of three or more Aboriginal businesses which can demonstrate significant sales or employment potential as an outcome of an ABLP project;
- 50 percent or more Aboriginal owned and operated
- have a current sales record and be trading in products or services for profit

The conditions of the *ABLP* are*:*

- Maximum subsidy payable is 75% of the project cost;
- For Link 1 projects, the maximum subsidy rate is $2,500 per participant per project;
- The maximum subsidy per group project is $15,000;
- Businesses can only claim a *ABLP* subsidy once per six month period, with a maximum of four projects over two years;
- Payments are made when milestones are achieved, as agreed with DSRD;
- Participants must agree to complete sales and employment evaluation surveys six months after completion of the project and each 12 months for another three years.

The *ABLP* is widely accessible via DSRD Regional Advisory Centres throughout NSW: Northern Rivers, Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, Central Coast, Illawarra, Murray, New England, North West, Far Western, Orana, Central West, greater Western Sydney, Hunter, South East and Riverina.

N2 Tourism NSW Policy Development

Tourism NSW is involved in a number of initiatives including *Policy Development. Policy Development,* which was being developed in February 2002, was to consist of Tourism NSW Website exposure for Indigenous tourism via case studies and fact sheets.

N3 NSW Indigenous Cultural Experience

NSW Indigenous Cultural Experience is a promotional brochure produced by Tourism NSW showcasing a range of established, successful Indigenous

tourism business in the Sydney, Hunter Valley, Murray/Darling and Wentworth regions. The businesses are engaged in retailing traditional Indigenous arts and craft and providing cultural and bush tucker experiences.

N4 Murray Outback Aboriginal Cultural Trail

Another promotional brochure, *Murray Outback Aboriginal Cultural Trail*, is produced by Tourism NSW in partnership with Tourism Victoria and Murray Outback Tourism. The promotional brochure provides visitors with details of a trail of Indigenous cultural businesses, experiences and accommodation throughout the Murray Outback Region along the Murray and Darling Rivers. The brochure also lists affiliated Tourist Information Centres and connects visitors with NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Victorian Department of Natural Resources & Environment, Parks Victoria, State Forests of NSW.

N5 Indigenous Tourism

Another initiative undertaken by Tourism NSW was a two page commercial special-feature *Indigenous Tourism* located in *Sydney - The Official Guide (Spring/Summer 2001)*. This two page feature included details of Sydney and Blue Mountains museums, art galleries, Indigenous commercial galleries, shops, performance, food, art and rock carving sites, boomerang throwing and three Aboriginal sites tour operators.

N6 Online Home-based Business Kit (HomeBiz Kit)

The *HomeBiz Kit* is provided by the Department of State and Regional Development and is available to Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The *HomeBiz Kit* is a free online service that incorporates business planning with links to other advice and sources of funding.

Results of the analysis of the New South Wales Initiatives

The following table provides the raw scores for the six initiatives analysed:

Initiative	**Vision**	**Environment**	**Opportunity**	**Capacity**	**Feasibility**	**Management**	**Monitoring**	**Overall Score**
Aboriginal Business Link Program	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	*4*
Tourism New South Wales	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0.5*
NSW Indigenous Cultural Experience	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0.5*
Murray Outback Aboriginal Cultural Trail	0.5	0	0.5	0	0	0.5	0.5	*2*
Indigenous Tourism promotion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	*0.5*
HomeBiz Kit	0.5	0	0	0.5	0	0	0.5	*1.5*

Table 4: Analysis of New South Wales Programs

These results indicate that the availability of services appropriate to the needs of Indigenous tourism operators is not adequate in NSW to allow for the development of Indigenous tourism product. We had anticipated that the areas that the federal initiatives did not cover adequately would be the basis of the predominant provision of services by the NSW initiatives. Discussions with Indigenous groups suggests these results are indicative of the problems they face in attempting to develop Indigenous tourism product in NSW.

Victoria

In Victoria there is one Indigenous specific initiative and three general initiatives. In addition, Tourism Victoria publicises successful Indigenous tourism enterprises, however, there appear to be no strategies geared to Indigenous tourism development.

V1 Koori Business Network

The Department of State and Regional Development provides the *Koori Business Network*. The Network provides funding for Indigenous business, however, information about this initiative is very difficult to access.

V2 Victorian Small Business Counselling Services

The Department of State and Regional Development also provides the *Victorian Small Business Counselling Services* initiative. This Service is available to anyone in Victoria aimed at mentoring small businesses by providing counselling via a website and helping develop networks. There is a 'minimal fee' required to access counselling services, for example, one basic session with a counsellor costs $80.

V3 Enterprise Improvement Program

The Enterprise Improvement Program provides small business grants to businesses in regional Victoria wanting to improve their productivity through technology and innovation. Grants of up to $10,000 are available to assist businesses in priority areas such as manufacturing, regional industries, food and services. Innovation, Industry and Regional Development (formerly State and Regional Development Victoria) is responsible for this program and they forward all enquires to the closest regional office in Victoria.

V4 Regional Assistance Program

The *Regional Assistance Program*, provided by DEET Victoria, consists of a training website that lists a large number of educational networks and training services. The website demonstrates best practice in training. The site also includes a self-educational guide in developing community links and partnerships.

Results of the Analysis of the Victorian Initiatives

The following table provides the raw scores for the six initiatives analysed:

Initiative	Vision	Environment	Opportunity	Capacity	Feasibility	Management	Monitoring	Overall Score
Koori Business Network	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Victorian Small Business Counselling Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Enterprise Improvement Program	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	**6**
Regional Assistance Program	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	**1**

Table 5: Analysis of Victorian Programs

These results suggest no real discernable difference with New South Wales and are also believed to be indicative of the problems faced in attempting to develop Indigenous tourism product in Victoria.

Queensland

There is one initiative in Queensland that is available to Indigenous business and another initiative available to Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses.

Q1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Business Development Scheme

The State Development Department manages the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Business Development Scheme* that provides funding and assistance with business planning. The Department assists clients with mentoring, advice and face to face assistance in regional areas. A maximum subsidy of 75 per cent of the project or program costs is available under this initiative.

Q2 The Tourism Assistance Database

The database, accessible on the web and provided by Tourism Queensland, is a referral service that directs businesses to possible funding and assistance sources. Prospective applicants are advised to contact the nominated funding or assistance agency direct regrading eligibility.

Results of the Analysis of the Queensland Initiatives

The following table provides the raw scores for the two initiatives analysed:

Initiative	Vision	Environment	Opportunity	Capacity	Feasibility	Management	Monitoring	*Overall Score*
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Business Development Scheme	0	2.5	2.5	2.5	3	3.5	2.5	***16.5***
Tourism Assistance Database	0	0	0.5	0.5	0	0.5	0.5	***2***

Table 6: Analysis of Queensland Programs

While there is some appropriate support services available in Queensland, it appears as if they are not focussed on the needs of the Indigenous communities but more with an economics driven approach to development.

South Australia

In South Australia there are two initiatives provided by the South Australian Tourism Commission, one in partnership with ATSIC.

S1 Industry Development Team Initiative

The South Australian Tourism Commission's (SATC) *Industry Development Team* offers advice to the tourism industry including individual operators. An officer position, specialising in Indigenous tourism, has been created within that team and will be filled late-2002. The team provides workshops, phone advice, and an industry advice kit for anyone with a business idea. A strategy brochure was developed in 1995 in conjunction with ATSIC's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Industry Strategy applying guidelines for tourism joint ventures between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal partners. The SATC aims to foster the Aboriginal tourism industry by developing employment programs and negotiating contracts and leases. The SATC will also support development of Aboriginal tourism training by providing eco-awareness seminars, tourism training workshops and membership of the the Aboriginal Hospitality Employment Strategy Committee. The SATC is also exploring with DETYA ways in which to present and encourage participation in

tourism career workshops. The SATC markets existing Aboriginal tourism businesses extensively.

S2 Guidelines for Tourism Joint Ventures between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Partners

These guidelines have been produced by the SATC in partnership with ATSIC. The guidelines have been written to help develop successful relationships between potential or existing partners based on genuine commitment, real and accurate cultural perceptions and recognition of all aspects of a tourism joint venture. The guidelines have been developed to provide practical approaches to developing joint ventures and identifying problems that may arise. The guidelines have also been designed to test the commercial viability and potential Aboriginal employment gains in the long term. The document caters for student interest in cultural tourism joint ventures based on a realistic understanding of what they might involve. The booklet contains examples of successful Aboriginal tourist enterprises and provides information regarding the process of planning and establishing a commercially viable joint venture. In addition, descriptions of business structures are provided along with an explanation of the ways to operate a business and the different types of joint venture available, including Aboriginal inputs, locations, local Indigenous cultures and tourist products. There is a listing of accredited and non-accredited cultural tourism training/ university/Tafe courses available in QLD, WA, SA and NT.

Results of the analysis of the South Australia Initiatives

The following table provides the raw scores for the two initiatives analysed:

Initiative	Vision	Environment	Opportunity	Capacity	Feasibility	Management	Monitoring	*Overall Score*
Industry Development Team Initiative	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	***4***
Guidelines for Tourism Joint Ventures	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	***0.5***

Table 6: Analysis of South Australian Programs

While offering little support to Indigenous tourism product startups, South Australia has some initiatives that are focussed on sustaining these businesses past the initial development phase. This approach appears to complement aspects the federal approach and offers a good scope for South Australian Indigenous tourism product success. Unfortunately, there is almost no appropriate initiatives for helping to scope out concepts that would be appropriate for the market.

Tasmania

No initiatives were highlighted in Tasmania, however, Tourism Tasmania are currently working with the State Office of Aboriginal Affairs on a development plan.

Northern Territory

There is one initiative, *A Guide to Tourism Business Brochure* available in the Northern Territory but it is not Indigenous specific. In addition, the NT Tourist Commission, in collaboration with the Office of Aboriginal Development and the Aboriginal Land Council, provides advice and direction for Indigenous people. If Aboriginal persons approach NT Tourism for direction referral would be given to Office of Aboriginal Development.

Initial contact with the Northern Land Council (NLC) is essential in any development proposal in the NT under *Native Title Act* (1976). The NLC can offer direction and mediation for ceremonial owners and persons seeking to operate on Native-owned land. Cases are treated on an individual basis and therefore no reference material is available

T1 A Guide to Tourism Business Brochure

A Guide to Tourism Business Brochure does not address Aboriginal tourism specifically and it does not provide strategies for establishment or expansion. The brochure is directed towards newcomers to the tourism industry and existing operators seeking to expand their businesses. The brochure follows a step by step approach, beginning with helping operators to ascertain the appropriateness of establishing a business. In addition, advice is provided on developing financial, marketing and business plans. No funding is offered via this initiative.

Western Australia

In WA, a range of assistance programs are provided by the Office of Aboriginal Economic Development (OAED). The Western Australian Tourism Commission and the Small Business Development Corporation also provide some initiatives available to Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and groups.

The OAED is a directorate of Western Australia's Department of Industry and Technology. It was established to support and encourage the development of enterprises that are owned by or employ Indigenous people. The OAED also works cooperatively with other State, Commonwealth and non-government agencies and tries to help Aboriginal clients access the full range of available business development and support services. The website includes a useful field "*How to apply for Assistance*" with a contact number as well as a list of the Regional Offices. Some of the other ATSIC publications outlined within this paper are downloadable from this website.

W1 The Enterprise Solutions Initiative

The Enterprise Solutions Initiatives assists clients to identify, develop and grow enterprises that have substantial outcomes for Indigenous people. There are project officers/mentors located in designated regional areas and funding of up to $10K available via this program. The initiative helps Indigenous people to identify enterprise opportunities and supports enterprise development through the provision of feasibility studies, business planning, marketing plans and the provision of professional expertise. The initiative also supports projects, at the industry sector or regional level, that provide benefits to other enterprises, for example, the development of industry sector websites and support for industry representative bodies.

W2 Business and Management Expertise Initiative

The Business and Management Expertise Initiative attempts to improve the skills that contribute to enterprise sustainability by providing project

officers/mentors in designated regional areas and funding up to $10K. The initiative includes identifying business skills and training needs and providing small business management training and corporate governance training. In addition, the initiative supports business mentoring.

W3 Strategic Financial Investment Product

The Strategic Financial Investment policy was established because of the recognition that investments by Indigenous corporate entities into Indigenous enterprises are critical elements for developing the long-term economic benefits for Indigenous people. Assistance may include identifying and assessing investment opportunities, identifying funding sources for Indigenous enterprises and assisting access to these and identifying and facilitating joint venture partnerships including negotiating on behalf of clients. The OAED works in partnership with other government agencies to assess the potential of an Indigenous enterprise and provide support required by the enterprise. For example, an individual may need to attend a management course in order to develop a business. The OEAD will contact an agency, such as West Australian Department of Training (WADOT), who will assess funding requirements for the individual to attend the course. For study areas such as tourism, mining, and arts, the OAED can work with private and government organisations. The OAED take a 'business case approach' to funding as financial needs change according to business strategy. In mid-2002 the OAED were in the process of developing one financial system. No fixed amounts of funding are offered as each case is assessed individually. Financial assistance schemes currently fund up to $10K. The OAED, in mid-2002, was in the process seeking Ministerial approval to increase this amount up to $50K.

W4 Integrated Services Provision

Integrated Services Provision is aimed at developing partnerships with other agencies and private sector entities to deliver services to Indigenous enterprises. This will involve the development of multi-lateral agreements with other relevant Government agencies.

W5 Western Australian Tourism Commission Tourism Industry Development Division Advice

The WA Tourism Commission's *Tourism Industry Development Division* provides individual advice to tourism operators based on a business idea. This advice consists of telephone discussions about a business concept and the provision of a marketing plan template on which to base or develop a business plan upon. There is no specific Indigenous focus, funding or program offered by this division.

W6 Small Business Development Corporation Website Advice

The Small Business Development Corporation website provides links to other relevant websites and phone numbers, including relevant funding bodies specific to WA. A link is also provided to a website entitled *Small Business Assistance Officers Available for Rural and Regional Areas*. This website provides details about how regional small business operators can benefit from the $6 million Small Business Officer Pilot Project that commenced in July 2001. This initiative is designed to provide operators with an information and referral service on a full range of government initiatives available to small business. For example, a local Small Business Assistance Officer will be able to help identify what assistance and support is available to help pursue opportunities in the expanding e-commerce field.

Results of the Analysis of the Western Australia Initiatives

The following table provides the raw scores for the six initiatives analysed:

Initiative	**Vision**	**Environment**	**Opportunity**	**Capacity**	**Feasibility**	**Management**	**Monitoring**	**Overall Score**
The Enterprise Solutions Initiative	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	**52.5**
Business and Management Expertise Initiative	0.5	0	0	0	0	7.5	7.5	**15.5**
Strategic Financial Investment product	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	**52.5**
Integrated Services Provision	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
WATC Tourism Industry Development Division	0.5	0	0.5	0	0	0	0	**1**
Small Business Development Corporation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**

Table 7: Analysis of Western Australian Programs

Clearly, Western Australia has a very integrated approach to developing Indigenous tourism opportunities. They even have 2 bodies responsible for ensuring that the different sectors of the public service, both federal and state, work together effectively to provide appropriate services to Indigenous tourism entrepreneurs and operators.

Conclusions

There are five key findings of this research which warrant attention as programs and initiatives are developed and implemented:

- There is generally poor coordination between programs within and across jurisdictions;
- the focus of many programs is on promoting the idea of Indigenous participation in tourism rather than providing resources to realise this participation;
- many programs may be difficult to access for Indigenous enterprises in regional areas due to poor support services and lack of access to technology;
- programs provide little assistance in 'visioning' and applying techniques of market research to feasibility assessment; and
- programs provide little ongoing support for businesses beyond the business planning phase, despite the heightened pressures on Indigenous enterprises to succeed over the long term.

Addressing these fundamental issues requires commitment from public and private sector stakeholders to increasing coordination. It also requires a program of research to establish market perceptions of Indigenous product, market readiness requirements for such product, and 'best practice' models of enterprise management which are sensitive to the cultural, historical, and political environments in which many of these enterprises operate.

The results suggest that the centralisation of initiatives that appears to be occurring in the federal sphere is an appropriate response to the need for increased coordination between initiatives. It also suggests that the entire range of initiatives require examination to ensure that they offer what is appropriate to helping develop Indigenous tourism product. There appears to be some replication between sectors at the federal level and between some federal and state initiatives. Clearly, the federal approach is orientated to the development of products and the provision of training for operators. Where the states could improve and compliment these initiatives would be in the conduct of market research to discover what the tourists to particular areas wish to utilise or engage with; and an assessment of how developed businesses could manage and develop themselves further in a sustainable fashion.

The large range of Indigenous promotional material, while outlining the success of Indigenous tourism, seems to have relatively little value in providing useful information and support for new and existing businesses. One of the possible reasons for this is a cultural difference in communication and education approaches. Indigenous people seem more comfortable with small face-to-face interactions for learning and culturally self-help approaches seem less productive.

There are many and various opportunities to access program information via the Internet, however, this kind of assistance may be of limited value to a person in remote locations or without access to computer facilities. Some of the websites were useful, however many programmes included within this paper were not posted for disclosure of relevant information. The greatest difficulty in obtaining information about the initiatives occurred in Queensland, Tasmania, and to a lesser degree, the Northern Territory and Victoria.

Our experience in researching this paper indicates that the process of making contact with relevant organisations is often convoluted and this may deter some people or groups. We made many telephone calls whilst collecting data and in a number of cases were transferred to the wrong people. Some calls never were returned despite numerous attempts being made, and in some cases the process of obtaining basic information or waiting for a return call could take as long as a week. The situation in some states was worse than in others.

However, the most important conclusion that we have reached concerns what products are being developed, for whom, and on what basis has this been determined. Over 60 per cent of all international visitors to Australia expressed an interest to experience Indigenous heritage (Zeppel, 1998). And general interest in Indigenous culture from non-Indigenous Australians appears to be increasing according to various media and reports, including the Report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991). Although there is little or no primary research available to support these positions, tourism has been promoted as an economic development mechanism for Indigenous communities. While recognising that Indigenous cultural heritage is a significant potential resource for the tourism industries in Australia our review of literature could not find any specific evidence of:

1. research that addressed the potential size and location of a market for Indigenous product; or
2. research that identified what Indigenous product(s) are sought by tourists (regardless of market).

It would seem essential that this research be given a priority status as the answers go to the fundamental issues associated with successful tourism

product development (Leiper 1995). It is difficult to envisage how any enterprise support program could succeed in the face of a lack of such fundamental information.

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