



Indigenous participation in tourism and its management

(Revision 0) September 2005

Context

- Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have connections to 'sea country' in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.
- Tourism is the major economic activity in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.
- Tourism is, and has the potential to become, an increasingly important industry for Indigenous communities adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef.
- The goal of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) is to provide for the protection, wise use, understanding and enjoyment of the Great Barrier Reef in perpetuity through the care and development of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.
- The GBRMPA has an important role in managing tourism in the Marine Park, especially through tourism program permits, planning arrangements, zoning and encouraging best practices.
- Greater participation by Indigenous communities in tourism and its management can contribute to the care and development of the Marine Park.

Vision

As partners, Tourism Queensland, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and the GBRMPA are working with Indigenous groups plus other government agencies and tourism operators to enhance Indigenous participation in tourism and its management in the Great Barrier Reef.

The joint long-term vision is:

- Indigenous people owning, operating and being involved in tourism operations in the Marine Park and
- Indigenous participation in the way tourism is managed.

The different expertise, perspectives and responsibilities of each of the groups and government agencies involved will be very important in collectively achieving this vision. Each group and agency involved has a different role to play.

GBRMPA's Role

The GBRMPA's role in achieving the joint vision is to:

- Ensure that Marine Park regulatory and other arrangements are appropriate for any emerging initiatives in Indigenous tourism, including the allocation of specific Indigenous permits
- Work with traditional owners and Land Councils to improve Indigenous input into Marine Parks permitting and management, including native title notification and assessments of cultural and heritage values
- Encourage marine tourism operators to be involved in fostering Indigenous participation in marine tourism
- Work with other key agencies, Indigenous groups and the tourism industry to coordinate and facilitate a better understanding of Indigenous community and tourism industry perspectives and aspirations regarding Indigenous participation in marine tourism.

Allocation of Indigenous Special Tourism Permissions

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) has set aside a number of Indigenous Special Tourism Permissions under the Plans of Management for Cairns (5 permits), Hinchinbrook (3 permits) and the Whitsundays (5 permits).

These permits are intended for traditional inhabitants who have traditional affiliations with the relevant Planning Area. The GBRMPA is required to allocate these permits through an expression of interest process, as follows:

- The Indigenous Special Tourism Permissions will be allocated through an expression of interest process as defined in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations (Division 2.6).
- The allocation process will commence for the relevant Planning Area, based on demand from one or more eligible Traditional Owner(s) for a special tourism permission.
- Written advice will be provided to potential applicants, relevant Land Councils and Commonwealth and State Government agencies well in advance of an upcoming call for expressions of interest (for example two months).
- The following selection criteria will be used to rank any applications, subject to minor variations for particular opportunities:
 - Demonstrated competence and knowledge relevant to the tourism opportunity, for example tourism experience, business knowledge and a sound business proposal.
 - Extent to which the operation will enhance protection of Marine Park values, for example through adoption of best practices and improved protection of sites of cultural significance.
 - Extent to which the operation will enhance presentation of Marine Park values, for example the quality and quantity of interpretation and education, the extent to which the operation will enhance the range of visitor experiences available and the standard of client services and infrastructure.
- The GBRMPA will meet with relevant Traditional Owner groups, Land Councils and Commonwealth and State Government agencies before an allocation process has commenced to outline the process, particularly the selection criteria.
- An application period of at least four months will be allowed.
- Applications from joint venture partnerships or companies that include non-Traditional Owners will be allowed, providing that eligible Traditional Owners are the major partner(s) or majority shareholder(s).

Further information

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Document Control Information	
Approved by:	Chief Executive Officer
	Approved date: 24-Dec-18
	Note: Approval reclassified this as a guideline. Full review is yet to be conducted.
Last reviewed:	1-Sep-18
Next review:	23-Dec-23
Created:	18-Sep-18
Document custodian:	Director, Policy and Planning
Replaces:	Position statement on Indigenous participation in Tourism and its management

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