

Inquiry into Opportunities and Methods for Stimulating the Tourism Industry in Northern Australia

FEBRUARY, 2017

Ancient Tracks New Journeys



WE ARE INDIGENOUS TOURISM ON COUNTRY

Summary

Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Council welcomes the opportunity to participate in the discussion of Tourism in Northern Australia offering true cohesion between its members, and other stakeholders at a state federal and global level The organisation is the first Aboriginal tourism organisation in Australia to offer marketing, advocacy and business development to Aboriginal Tourism Businesses There are many opportunities and methods for stimulating the Aboriginal Tourism Industry in the North. The summary of recommendations is listed below for consideration.

Building Business Capabilities		<p>Federal Government has committed to an Indigenous Advancement. Our North, Our Future: White paper on Developing Northern Australia White paper does not reflect the “Closing the Gap”</p> <p>Federal Government Develop Indigenous Business opportunities for the North.</p> <p>The Indigenous Entrepreneurs Package to more specific for Northern approach</p> <p>R&D support with Universities and Aboriginal Communities that specialises with Aboriginal Community Development. WAITOC has a relationship with Curtin University Translational Research Centre of knowledges and Well-being.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Collective for Culturally Secure Aboriginal Research that is collaborative and multidisciplinary in nature and which encourages and produces translational outcomes in partnership with place-based Aboriginal communities.
Opportunity Geo Tourism		<p>Page 143 and 162 of the Federal white show no connectivity to Aboriginal Business development or discussions on Linking Businesses into natural regions landscapes, connecting Aboriginal people empowered to tell their story, history and tradition with the landscape</p> <p>Link with Bushwalking, 4x4 Tours, Camel Tours, environmental research tourism and potential carbon offset tourism engagement programs e.g traditional fire management</p> <p>Land access for investment security impacting on key regional investments by and with Aboriginal people/communities</p>
Barrier		
<p>Industrial Tourism –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewable Energy • Business to Business partnerships with Aboriginal communities 		<p>Western Australian Government has delivered Regional Resilient families’: stronger communities Road Map. His document assist with the grass roots issue to assist in breaking down red tape and establishing stronger communities. A continuation of this across the Northern Australia would assist in the building Promoting off the grid communities</p> <p>Creating partnerships with key infrastructure such as airport and road development signage design creating long term economy for the region in tourism asset</p>

		management. Can you give me insight into this one are you asking for regional design in signage?
Agri-Tourism /Aquaculture tourism		Land Tenure. Land reform was extensive in WA and together with Federal Government this area would assist in Issue Creating opportunities for Aboriginal people on country through creating economic development and unique tourism experiences. Emerging Native Bushfoods opportunities. No mention of the Feral government intention to assist Aboriginal Business is this important sector and most connected to Aboriginal Communities
WAITOC Expertise		Working to Create a Northern Body and a national Aboriginal Tourism Body. WAITOC is the only established Aboriginal Tourism body in Australia
Red Tape		The Indigenous Advancement strategy is not reflective in the White Paper on how it would help break down the red tape.
Communication		NBN not able to service the regional areas of WA. Download speed. Most regional households in WA turnover min \$100K-\$5B with a landline access. NBN will be unable to service remote communities. Aboriginal Communities are conducting business on country in the most remote areas. Communication and reliability of business is crucial in remote WA Key infrastructure for safety and increased business opportunity in particular internet and phone coverage.
Roads		Roads to prime destinations need to be sealed and maintained and sign posted uniformly across the region for ease of national and international travellers. Aboriginal communities are located on remote areas. For example Dampier Peninsula sealed road access man it is more than a road it opens up economic and social development. R&D requires to connect to understand and lose the identity of many Aboriginal Communities. Outback Highway would connect the north and south and east. Investigation on what help to better connectivity between Northern part of the states
Railway		Work with Queensland rail or other such business to link key destinations across the area use rail for people and cargo to improve capacity and value.
Port		Cruise Develop infrastructure to support the Cruise market include Torres strait islands stops where viable
Air Travel		Ensure it is cost affective. Link with UK / Germany and other markets that are particularly Aboriginal tourism focused. Focusing with key ports of KNX,KTA for better accessibility into the North of WA
Marine Parks		Reducing red tape on state/National Parks for Aboriginal Business to conduct business

REF :<http://northernaustralia.gov.au/files/files/NAWP-FullReport.pdf>

http://regionalservicesreform.wa.gov.au/sites/regionalservicesreform.wa.gov.au/files/pdfs/CS671_RSRU_RoadMapDocument_Web_v4.pdf

<http://www.lands.wa.gov.au/Crown-Land/Rangelands-Reform/Pages/default.aspx>

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Introduction:

Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council welcomes the opportunity to participate in the discussion of Tourism in Northern Australia. The Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operator's Council (WAITOC) was established in October 2000 and became an Incorporated not for profit Association in May 2002. WAITOC has represented its members that have been located across the whole state of Western Australia in marketing the unique products of its members at consumer shows, industry events and international forums. It is a founding member of World Indigenous Tourism Alliance and part of establishing the UN supported Larakia Declaration. (See Appendix a); and is a key advocacy body for Aboriginal tourism at both a state and federal level.

WAITOC

The organisation is the first Aboriginal tourism organisation in Australia to offer marketing, advocacy and business development to Aboriginal Tourism Businesses.

As a member driven organisation it understands the importance of Aboriginal Tourism as a unique activity and attraction to the tourism market. As importantly WAITOC has seen the benefits of tourism which allows Aboriginal people to contribute unique products to markets while still maintaining and valuing the Aboriginal cultural heritage of individuals communities and language groups across WA. The organisation offers true cohesion between its members, and other stakeholders at a state federal and global level. WAITOC empowers its members to embrace their cultural identity in order to honour and respect the ancestors and Elders both past, present and future. With traditions of the oldest living culture restored, the outcomes at a social and economic level become more progressive and offer the opportunity to create pride in its people. Showcasing these traditions fosters current and potential market understanding, sensitivity and awareness. Access and engagement with these traditions is a key consideration for the development of a sustainable Aboriginal tourism industry in Australia.

1. Domestic and international tourism comprising: recreational, environmental, cultural, educational, and industrial tourism

1.1 Business Development

2. WAITOC KPI build more Tourism Business. Dealing with red tape and infrastructure....

WAITOC has partnered with Curtin University to assist in the fundamental issues for Aboriginal Businesses

Curtin University Direction

The Translational Research Centre for Aboriginal Knowledges and Wellbeing will gather authentic Aboriginal knowledges using multifocal lenses to capture the layers of interaction among the domains that comprise wellbeing for Indigenous Australians. We will utilise a strength based approach combined with Indigenous research designs (i.e. Community Participatory Action Research) and methodologies (i.e. qualitative data collection such as yarning circles) to extrapolate and understand

the strengths of our people and how we can best utilise what is working in our communities rather than what is not working.

Justification

Aboriginal people have a significantly lower life expectancy than other Australians (ABS, 2014). All Australian governments in the last two decades have acknowledged that Aboriginal Australians are the most disadvantaged citizens across all socio-economic indicators including primary health indicators (ABS, 2014). In fact, Aboriginal Australians are one of the most disadvantaged Indigenous populations in the world (e.g., Cooke et al., 2007). Unfortunately, a 'one dimensional system' is continually being developed and which contain policies and practices used by governments to tackle the range and diversity of challenges faced by the 'multi living generations' of Australia's Indigenous people. The current research space in Australia is standing still in 'silos.' What this means is that current research conducted in Australia and in deed in Western Australia tend to explore challenges with a single lens and that which creates a tunnel vision. If research has a narrow focus and then it will provide narrow results. To support this claim, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) findings across all categories including health, justice, education, housing, children in care etc, have not progressed but have fallen into a downward trend. It is a common practice of governments to continue to use deficit modelling to understand and make changes to the wellbeing of Australia's Indigenous communities. Yet, our people continue to suffer at the hands of such modelling and one dimensional answers retrieved from 'silo research.' What is needed is a holistic approach which can be achieved by acknowledging that challenges in one domain such as a lack of housing for a family will continue to impact their education, health, employment and economic wellbeing

Landscapes Environment Culture and Education.

The landscape of the Kimberly, Northern Territory and Queensland offer pristine and unique destinations which are linked with the traditions and the lives of the First Australians. One of the biggest global tourism success stories currently in UK, Europe, China and America are the formation of 'Geoparks.' An example is the Dorset region located in the UK had over 2.2 million visitors to the region in 2011. according to Dr Aise Kim

Senior Lecturer University of South Australia Adelaide. Creating interesting destinations for visitation that educates the importance Aboriginal cultural significance in relation to the of landscape, its geological makeup across Northern Australia could lead to sustainable unique and niche tourism products and experiences. it could create future business development in product and experiences while respecting the pristine environment of the region. This style of tourism can help to form regional areas where tourism businesses can work together to develop the product and attraction for these areas.

Currently a major barrier to Aboriginal business of any kind is the time it takes for Aboriginal people to be able to access land for use of tourism due to Federal government process. This process needs to be reviewed as it creates great restrictions to economic and social opportunities in the region if this opportunity is to be realised across the whole of Northern Australia. In fact, the government processes for business must be streamlined to accomplish:

1. Ease of understanding and implementation from a business perspective
2. Deduction of Government duplication of regulation.

I feel this needs to be reworded.

Federal Government process for the development of land for tourism impact greatly on individuals and communities seeking to develop key tourism products that will assist in returning economic independence for Aboriginal business.

1.2 Industrial Tourism

Northern Australia is one of the most untouched areas of the world. As the renewables industry develops this area is ideal for the Aboriginal professional diversity to develop within this industry. These industries already capture the minds of many and in the long term could offer great opportunities to create a form of Industrial tourism such as 'off the grid communities.'

1.2.1 Business to Business Partnerships with Aboriginal communities in Tourism infrastructure.

Currently government intervention in improving opportunities for Aboriginal business has been less effective than the Business to business partnerships. The mining industry has had more success by working with Aboriginal companies as contractors to ensure training and industry outcomes. Then within a set timeframe the Aboriginal businesses have been able to tender and win their own contracts. As much of the development is to be done on Aboriginal land for Roads, Airports and Sea, it would be beneficial to incorporate Aboriginal business partners for these infrastructure developments. A great example of this working is Maori North Island Tainui Group Holdings, the commercial arm of the Waikato-Tainui Iwi – Iwi is Māori for Tribe. Where in 2014 the companies reported, assets rose over NZ\$1 billion. Their investments included Agriculture, Tourism and Property portfolio. (Appendix B)

An Expansion of the Current Regional Development funded Aboriginal Tourism Development program would help to assist emerging, market ready businesses to become export ready.

1.3 Agritourism

Agriculture and Aquaculture tourism offers a diversifiable way for Aboriginal people to create income and still maintain the strong links to their land. Native Bush foods is an emerging industry Aboriginal land access to attract investors with a level of security in relation to the land tenure will position Aboriginal people and communities to capitalise on to be new opportunities in the future trends in the Native Bush Foods industry.

3. The role of peak bodies, local communities, and all levels of government in developing and promoting tourism opportunities nationally and internationally, including regulations and workforce issues that may inhibit tourism development

2.1 Cohesion of stakeholders

As the North expands it will require strong marketing links with National and International bodies. From experience WAITOC has been able to create a benchmark not for profit organisation that could

assist this process by playing a leading role empowering the businesses to become a voice for the region as WAITOC is Australia's peak body for Aboriginal tourism currently. WAITOC has developed a board that incorporates a majority of directors from the grassroots Hero's and Advocates from the region. This board make up essentially will ensure that the Aboriginal tourism industry will grow in strength.

2.2 Red Tape Reduction

Currently Australia has too much red tape. It is limiting growth of business and depleting opportunity for innovation. It is essential to create a more streamlined cross pollination of departments in processes at both a state and federal government level. A study would be useful in order to give government proof of what Aboriginal businesses anecdotally see as issues and blockages for building Aboriginal business capabilities. Areas to investigate for example,

- a) What are the critical success factors for Aboriginal tourism businesses to be sustainable in Northern Australia?
- b) Opportunities and barriers for manufacturing in the North lead by Aboriginal corporations and or Aboriginal small business.'

If the north is to create a vibrant and must see destination for its land and its people it requires a roll back of this red tape, Incentives for business development, planned infrastructure development to ensure accessibility and it needs to be cost effective for international and national travellers; as a significant portion of the tourism market for the region is the Caravan and Camping market, from both the Domestic and International sectors.

4. Communication and transport infrastructure (particularly air, sea, road and rail transport and port infrastructure) which may facilitate and grow tourism.

3.1) Communication

Currently our Members in the community have difficulty in business due to the lack of access to communication. Internet and telephone coverage is spasmodic to non-existent in much of this region. For the region to grow into a thriving tourism destination the tourism market need to be able to access these basic needs. Communication is more important in cases of Safety for FIT travellers in the region. Access to first aid needs to be addressed as part of the implementation of infrastructure in the region.

3.2) Transport

Most of the Roads in the region are not sealed, in some places, accounting for more than more the 70% of roads. To accommodate increased numbers of people infrastructure like roads can be designed to ensure minimum damage to the environment with maximum visitation. These roads need to be maintained to tourism destinations and signage across

the region that is uniform and easy to understand for both national and international travellers. A priority is the connectivity of the great central road between WA, NT, QLD

3.3) Railway

Railway is an underutilised investment in Australia. Internationally it is an affordable way to travel, it offers safe ways to move produce and cargo and bring in people. Currently Queensland has created a way to see the outback via fast rail and this could be a way to link the other states and settlements together. Western Australia has limited to no investment in rail in the Northern Australia.

3.4) Port Infrastructure

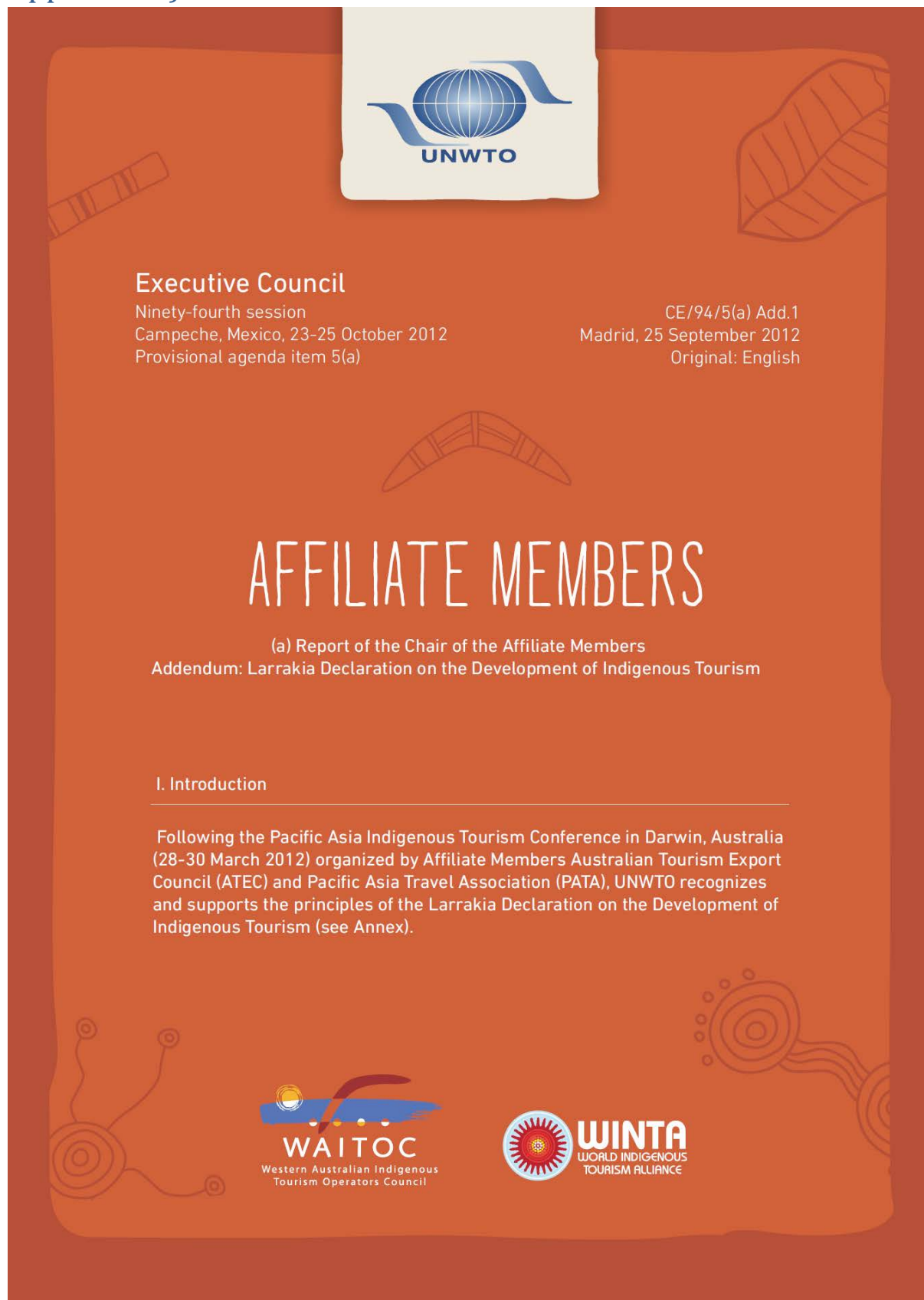
Developing port infrastructure is a way to leverage off the successful Cruise industry and further link with Asia. Key ports could also include the offshore Islands of the north offering more connectivity to the mainland.

3.5) Air Travel

Air travel costs are currently prohibitive, to create tourism demand, the Airlines need to be able to reach 80% capacity both ways. Creating Key declinational links will be the key to ensuring Aboriginal tourism and Tourism is successful. Investing in links with high demand for Aboriginal tourism product countries such as Germany and the UK would increase the success of Aboriginal tourism in this region.

APPENDICES

Appendix A) Larakia Declaration



Annex. Larrakia Declaration on the Development of Indigenous Tourism

The first Pacific Asia Indigenous Tourism Conference was held in Darwin, on the traditional lands of the Larrakia people on the 28th - 30th March 2012. There were 191 delegates from 16 countries representing Indigenous communities, government agencies, the tourism industry and supporting bodies, resolved to adopt principles to guide the development of Indigenous tourism through the following declaration.

- Recognising that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted on the 13th September 2007, provides the foundation for this declaration.
- Recognising that whilst tourism provides the strongest driver to restore, protect and promote Indigenous cultures, it has the potential to diminish and destroy those cultures when improperly developed.
- Recognising that as the world becomes increasingly homogenous Indigenous cultures will become increasingly important for tourism to provide differentiation, authenticity and the enrichment of visitor experiences.
- Recognising that for Indigenous tourism to be successful and sustainable, Indigenous tourism needs to be based on traditional knowledge, cultures and practices and it must contribute to the well being of Indigenous communities and the environment.
- Recognising that Indigenous tourism provides a strong vehicle for cultural understanding, social interaction and peace.
- Recognising that universal Indigenous values underpin intergenerational stewardship of cultural resources and understanding, social interaction and peace.

It is hereby resolved to adopt the following principles; that...

- Respect for customary law and lore, land and water, traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions, cultural heritage that will underpin all tourism decisions.
- Indigenous culture and the land and waters on which it is based, will be protected and promoted through well managed tourism practices and appropriate interpretation.
- Indigenous peoples will determine the extent and nature and organizational arrangements for their participation in tourism and that governments and multilateral agencies will support the empowerment of Indigenous people.
- That governments have a duty to consult and accommodate Indigenous peoples before undertaking decisions on public policy and programs designed to foster the development of Indigenous tourism.
- The tourism industry will respect Indigenous intellectual property rights, cultures and traditional practices, the need for sustainable and equitable business partnerships and the proper care of the environment and communities that support them.
- That equitable partnerships between the tourism industry and Indigenous people will include the sharing of cultural awareness and skills development which support the well-being of communities and enable enhancement of individual livelihoods.

This conference calls on governments and all sections of the tourism industry to support the leadership shown by the Pacific Asia Travel Association, Tourism NT and the Australian Tourism Export Council in organising this conference, by building bridges of partnership and cooperation between Indigenous people and their tourism industry organisations.

This conference recognizes the launch of the World Indigenous Tourism Alliance to facilitate, advocate and network with each affiliated Indigenous tourism body and with industry, governments and multilateral agencies.

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) - A Specialized Agency of the United Nations

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Appendix B New Zealand's Māori economy

New Zealand's Māori economy: a powerful force in the Kiwi success story

THE ECONOMY

Bernard Hickey Publisher at Hive News

Published 22 July 2014

This year's Matariki or Māori New Year Festival marked a major milestone for both Māori business and the New Zealand economy.

Early in the festival [Tainui Group Holdings](#), the commercial arm of the [Waikato-Tainui Iwi](#) – Iwi is Māori for tribe - reported its [assets rose over NZ\\$1 billion](#) for the first time.

This made the North Island's Tainui the second Iwi to report assets worth more than \$NZ1 billion after the South Island's Ngai Tahu achieved the feat last year.

"Surpassing the \$1 billion mark in total asset value is a milestone of which we can and should be proud," said Rahui Papa, the Chairman of Te Aratura o Waikato-Tainui.

Papa pointed out the result came on the 20th anniversary of the settlement of Tainui's Treaty of Waitangi claim in 1995 when the Government awarded the Iwi \$NZ170 million in compensation for lands taken by the Government in 1860.

"When you consider where we have come from as an Iwi, the challenges we have faced, and the value we have created to grow that initial settlement – we have made significant strides in 19 years," Papa said in releasing Tainui's annual result.

It has been a long road for iwi since the initial settlements in the mid 1990s but the growth in assets and business activities is accelerating and changing the fabric of New Zealand's business life and economy in a way few had predicted.

The early settlements were controversial and came after decades of political and legal action over the Treaty of Waitangi, now seen as New Zealand's foundation document. Essentially a promise in 1840 by Queen Victoria to protect Māori ownership of land, fisheries and other assets in exchange for ceding national sovereignty to Britain, it formed the basis for modern New Zealand and set it apart from other colonial societies.

But the breaches by the Government in the form of confiscations of land in various wars through the late 1800s has since formed the basis for the settlements, which are still being negotiated for many Iwi.

The settlements for Tainui and [Ngai Tahu](#) have become the model for turbo-charging the development of Māori communities that have historically been over-represented in the statistics for poverty, poor health, incarceration and unemployment.

Both Iwi have benefited over the last decade in particular by investing heavily in agriculture, fisheries, tourism and commercial property, taking advantage of a longer term approach to investing and the outperformance of these sectors.

Visitors to New Zealand are met almost immediately by this approach. Tainui invested in a joint venture with Auckland Airport and Accor that built and runs the \$NZ65 million Novotel hotel just 50 metres from the front door of Auckland's International Airport.

Opened in 2011 just before the Rugby World Cup, the 260 room hotel is benefiting from a projected doubling of tourist arrivals through the airport to 24 million a year by 2025.

Tainui has also been a heavy investor in the fast-growing Waikato region and its urban centre of Hamilton which has grown with a surge in dairy revenues over the last decade. Tainui owns the city's biggest new shopping centre, [Te Awa](#) (The Base) and plans to develop a \$NZ3.3 billion inland port, logistics and housing project on the fringes of Hamilton at Ruakura.

Ngai Tahu has also focused on longer-term investments based on agriculture, property and tourism. It was an early and big investor in retirement village owner and operator [Ryman Healthcare](#), which has been one of the stock market's star performers of the last decade. It also owns parts or all of some of New Zealand's best-known tourism attractions, including Queenstown's [Shotover Jet](#), [Taupo's Huka Falls Jet](#), [Rotorua's Agrodome](#) and [Kaikoura's Whalewatch](#).

Ngai Tahu is also a major player in the South Island's property development and farming sectors including housing developments around Christchurch and 83,600 hectares of rural land, including dairying, beef and sheep.

A good example of the focus on the developing agricultural businesses is the shared investment earlier this year by Tainui and Ngai Tahu in Waikato Milking Systems, which makes increasingly automated milking shed systems.

Both Iwi pride themselves on a longer term and more sustainable approach to farming and land use which is helping drive the debate nationally about the use of water, fertilizer and the condition of waterways.

"We operate as a smart intergenerational investor with a strong commitment to the long-term," Papa said in announcing Tainui Group Holding's net profit of \$NZ23 million and its annual dividend of \$NZ13.9 million.

This lifted Tainui's total dividends to Iwi groups since 2004 to \$NZ105.5 million. Of that, \$NZ55 million has been returned to in the form of grants for education, health, sports, cultural and community events.

[Ngai Tahu Group reported a net profit of NZ\\$27.2 million last year](#) and paid out dividends of \$NZ17.3 million, lifting its total returns and investments in its members to \$NZ290 million since its settlement.

But the big Iwi corporate groups are not the only Māori businesses growing. The sector includes more than 18,000 small businesses and self-employed people.

A [2010 study by BERL Economics](#) for development agency Te Puni Kokiri estimated the asset base of the Māori economy at \$NZ36.9 billion, up 18 per cent in real terms from 2006. More than half of that base was in agriculture and property, double the proportion found in New Zealand business as a whole. It found Māori-owned businesses produced \$NZ22.2 billion worth of goods and services in 2010 or around 11 per cent of GDP.

BERL forecast the Māori Economy could [grow annual output by a further NZ\\$12 billion by 2060](#) and generate a further 150,000 jobs.

BERL Chair and former CEO of [Aotearoa Fisheries](#) Robin Hapi captured the different approach to business in a recent report on the strength of the [Māori economy](#).

"Whanaungatanga (the importance of relationships), Kaitiakitanga (guardianship of the environment), Rangatiratanga (self-determination or Māori control of Māori assets) and Manaakitanga (care of people) are practices that Māori have sustained for many generations and these values will always be at the forefront of our business operations," Hapi said.

Statistics New Zealand Māori Business Statistics manager Jason Attewell also pointed to this more inter-generational approach to business in a [report on the sector](#) last month. He said 96 per cent of Māori businesses had a clear mission statement while just 56 per cent of all New Zealand businesses had such a statement.

This was reflected in Māori authorities holding 49 per cent of their assets in fixed tangible assets, compared with 28 per cent for all New Zealand businesses.

"Sustainability and providing for future generations are likely the drivers behind the physical-asset-based businesses we're seeing in Māori authorities," Attewell said.

The growth of the Māori economy is also reflected in the growing interest from the services sector and banking in particular. Statistics [NZ's Tatauranga Umaga report](#)

[for 2014](#) found equity made up 70 per cent of Māori authority assets, almost double that of the 37 per cent seen in all other businesses.