

## **Tourism Australia's Role**

Tourism Australia is the Federal Government statutory authority responsible for international and domestic tourism marketing as well as the delivery of research and forecasts for the sector.

Tourism Australia was established on 1 July 2004, bringing together the collective skills and knowledge of four separate organisations: the Australian Tourist Commission; See Australia; the Bureau of Tourism Research and Tourism Forecasting Council.

The main objectives of Tourism Australia under the Tourism Australia Act 2004 are to:

- Influence people to travel to Australia, including for events;
- Influence people travelling to Australia to also travel throughout Australia;
- Influence Australians to travel throughout Australia, including for events;
- Help foster a sustainable tourism industry in Australia; and
- Help increase the economic benefits to Australia from tourism

## **Nature Tourism**

Australia's natural and cultural assets are a major drawcard for international visitors. Protection and conservation of these assets is essential for the survival and sustainable growth of the tourism industry over the longer term.

The challenge for Australia is to encourage the development and management of tourism products and services that will provide economic and social benefits to local communities while protecting and enhancing our natural and cultural attributes.

Nature tourism is one of the key components of Brand Australia. National parks, conservation reserves and marine reserves are optimum locations to experience nature tourism and provide also great opportunities for outdoor experiences such as bushwalking, rock climbing, kayaking, diving, etc.

Australia has one of the most advanced eco accreditation system of the world, which helps ensure the development of environmentally friendly tourism product.

## **Demand for Nature Tourism**

Tourism Australia undertakes extensive market research both overseas and domestically, to fully understand travellers' behaviour, attitudes towards Australia and their motivation to visit the destination. The research has shown time and again that nature is a key drawcard for Australia and one of the main reasons for leisure tourists to visit the country.

In 2005, 53% of international visitors (leisure) visited a national park while in Australia. In the year ending June 2005, 9% of domestic overnight leisure trips included at least one visit to a national park; this amounted to around 5 million trips.

The research has also shown that travellers are demanding more interactive experiences, presenting an opportunity for protected areas to supply interpretation and learning options.

## **Tourism Australia and Parks Australia**

Tourism Australia works closely with Parks Australia. In October 2005, both organisations signed a letter of agreement to form a partnership and develop the National Landscapes project, which consists in the identification of a key number of iconic national landscapes to promote Australia's outstanding natural features for national and international tourism.

### **Funding for Protected Areas**

Adequate funding for protected areas will allow these to provide adequate facilities for tourism:

- Visitor information and interpretation centres
- Trekking trails
- Signage and maps
- Camping sites
- Other facilities that may appeal to visitors

### **Conclusions**

- Tourism Australia's main objectives are to Influence international travellers to travel to Australia, and to influence Australians to travel throughout Australia.
- Nature tourism is a key component of Brand Australia and one of the main tourism experiences that travellers look for.
- National Parks, conservation reserves and marine protected areas are ideal places for visitors to experience nature tourism.
- Tourism Australia works closely with Parks Australia.
- Funding is crucial to continue developing and supplying quality experiences in protected areas, responding to consumer trends.