

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### INTERNATIONAL VISITORS GOING HOME DISAPPOINTED

A lack of suitable indigenous product is behind many international visitors going home disappointed, and this will be an agenda priority at the *Tourism Futures* conference being held in Brisbane next week, 5 – 7 July.

“This is a major growth area in the tourism industry. Global travellers are wanting meaningful and enriching life experiences; holidays that leave a lasting impression,” said Mr Tony Charters, Convenor of the prestigious industry conference.

“It is encouraging to see the Australian Tourism Export Council recently launch a new strategy to tackle this issue, backing up the Tourism Australia Indigenous Champions program, mentoring and training twenty indigenous operators.”

Aboriginal tourism operators will address *Tourism Futures*, along with members of the Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Committee, co-inciding with the annual celebration of NAIDOC week.

“Other countries around the world have responded to this trend more successfully than we have to date; countries in South America, Africa, and also New Zealand,” said Mr Charters.

“The other opportunity is the growing appetite for eco-tourism, and the combination of Aboriginal culture and the uniqueness of the Australian landscape is potentially a highly desirable product”

The concept of Aboriginal Australians entering the tourism industry is not a new one.

Several flagship operations had been spectacularly unsuccessful in previous decades, and inter-cultural tensions continue to flare periodically.

“The sector has some maturity these days, and governments need to play a role in establishing frameworks for indigenous communities wanting to pursue opportunities in tourism. Similarly governments can facilitate the partnership between developers and entrepreneurs and Aboriginal people,” said Mr Charters.

“We have some very innovative and professional Indigenous operators presenting at the conference as well as a highly successful Maori eco-tourism operator from New Zealand.

“These people will hopefully inspire others and provide a template for future successes. Many successful people in the tourism industry have benefitted from mentors – the frontrunners who led the way. Hopefully these speakers will spark further interest across the industry.”

Many Aboriginals are involved via art and performance, and some issues of equity and authenticity linger in this segment of the industry, which will also be addressed at the conference.

EIGHTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
**Tourism Futures**

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*Tourism Futures* is the premier national conference for senior executives from across the industry and government.

For a full conference program please visit [www.tourismfutures.com.au](http://www.tourismfutures.com.au)

ENDS  
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